CLINTON'S IRAQ WIMP-OUT • REPUBLICANS FOR DIVERSITY

THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 7, 1998 • $3.50

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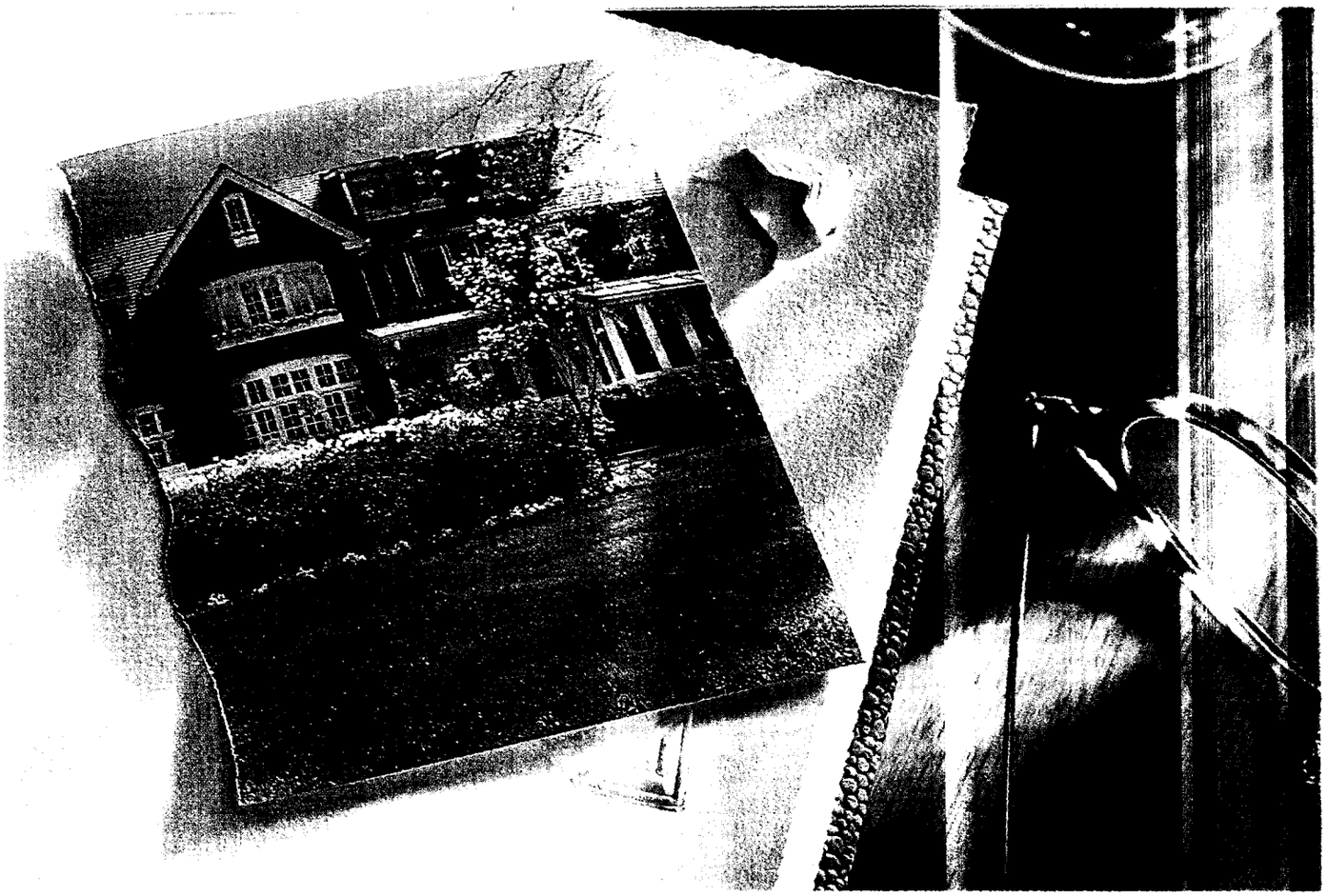

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

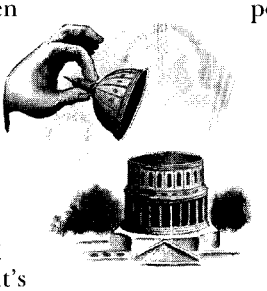
Quota kings

We Are All Multiculturalists Now is the pithy title of a recent book on race and politics by TNR's Nathan Glazer. Judging by recent events in Washington, it might also be the next Republican campaign slogan.

Listening to the House Republicans discuss how to choose their new leaders last week was a bit like sitting in on a Yale Law School admissions meeting—or perhaps a session of the Clinton administration's executive talent search committee. "Diversity," that venerable liberal rationale for affirmative action, was the common premise underlying much of the event. Certainly it was the logic driving both the candidacy of J.C. Watts of Oklahoma for Republican Conference Chairman and the candidacy of Jennifer Dunn of Washington for majority leader. Watts, who is black, spoke of the need to demonstrate "inclusiveness." Dunn justified her bid in explicit terms of "cultural diversity." Indeed, the remarks by Dunn and other Republican women about the contest could have been scripted by Carol Gilligan or Deborah Tannen. Sue Myrick, running unsuccessfully for vice chair of the conference (she was beaten by another woman, Tillie Fowler of Florida), told *The New York Times* that women "bring a special—let's not say special—a different way of working." The ladies, she continued, "are always trying to get people to get along. And males don't always.... Well, we tend to be less confrontational." Even a Republican woman, it seems, has come to the conclusion that, on some issues, those Southern white men in the party just don't understand.

In the end, Watts defeated incumbent Chairman John Boehner of Ohio; Dunn, along with conservative ultra Steve Largent of Oklahoma (do they have a farm down there where they grow these guys?), lost to incumbent Dick Armey of Texas in a three-ballot cliffhanger. But the real victor was the diversity mentality itself. Sure, *The Washington Times*, a reliable sounding board for conservative opinion, reported that some members were "privately" grumbling about how deeply the diversity rationale, and even a kind of difference feminism, had penetrated mainstream GOP discourse. But, publicly, hardly a peep was heard—not even from the likes of Charles Canady of Florida, the author of legislation that would have banned most forms of affirmative action in federal programs. And Canady is a man who has previously said that "classifications based on race are inherently harmful."

After this performance, it's hard to see how the Republicans can ever mount a principled campaign against affirmative action again. True, Republicans have always been more eager to criticize affirmative action on the campaign trail—and thereby exploit white resentment of it—than they have been to actually tackle preferences once in office. Indeed, both Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole abandoned Canady's bill in 1996, and it's gone nowhere since then. (Watts, conservative as he is, has never advocated abolishing affirmative action.) Nevertheless, usually Republicans could at least be counted upon to offer a rhetorical counterpoint to liberal diversity squishiness. Until now, that is. Suddenly, after one big political scare—a poor election result that pollsters and pundits blame on the party's failure to attract women, Latinos, and blacks—the Republicans have undercut whatever was left of their purported commitment to color- and gender-blindness.



The irony is delicious. But is this healthy for the country? Surely it will be better for all Americans, minorities and women especially, if the more conservative of the two parties takes seriously its duty to compete for everyone's vote. Blacks, in particular, have for too long been written off by Republicans—just as they have been taken for granted by Democrats. If the only way for the Republicans to attempt to change this in the short run is through a symbolic shake-up of their monochromatic House leadership, that's hardly the end of the world.

It would be infinitely preferable, however, if the Republicans could find a way to base their pitch on ideas rather than images. Notably, both Dunn and Watts failed to do this in their campaigns for the House leadership. Dunn, a prominent member of the party's moderate wing, let gender stand as a proxy for the substantive disagreements she has with Armey and other right-wingers. Watts, for his part, leavened his platform with a promise to hire outside consultants to improve Republican public relations strategies.

The problem with affirmative action in hiring or admissions is that it supersedes objective criteria of merit, distributing jobs or university slots to minorities who may or may not be as needy as the whites they displace. The diversity rationale cannot negate these problems, and it has a special flaw of its own: diversity of gender or skin color is simply not the same as diversity of viewpoint. One of the most pernicious characteristics of contemporary political culture is precisely the widely held assumption that people of color do, or should, share a particular political perspective—and that hiring, electing, or appointing an African American is equivalent to "including" the black point of view. (Bill Clinton's original 1993 Cabinet may have "looked like America," but most of its members were lawyers. How diverse in outlook were they?)

No one illustrates this point better than Watts, who, like black Republican Gary Franks of Connecticut before him, has been more or less sidelined from Congressional Black Caucus activities. The CBC worries that people might get the idea that all blacks do not necessarily share their liberal views. This is an offensive posture, but one Republicans can hardly criticize now that they, too, have implicitly endorsed the idea that a congressman's skin color says something about his beliefs.

What's really discouraging, though, is that the chances for a genuine, robust congressional debate over the merits of the various forms of affirmative action now seem so diminished. Republicans, by interpreting the election results as a mandate to steer clear of the subject—or, indeed, to embrace the philosophy of the Democrats—are signaling that racial preferences may no longer be a partisan matter in this country. That's good, to the extent that it means the Republicans are disavowing the more demagogic critiques of affirmative action that they have launched in the past. It's less welcome if it means that there will be fewer prominent voices in Washington articulating a principled case for color-blindness. The Republicans' newfound interest in the vital center is fine, but on this issue they might be taking moderation to an extreme.

CHARLES LANE

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4 **CHARLES LANE** TRB: QUOTA KINGS Congressional Republicans embrace diversity.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Hateful speech, expensive speech, &c.

9 **THE EDITORS** NO HAZARD After Mitch, pardoning Central America's debts is the compassionate thing to do. It also makes economic sense. NOTEBOOK Smart words on Malaysia, empty words on Stokely Carmichael, &c.

10 **PATRICK CLAWSON** SHOW OF FARCE Inspections don't work well. Sanctions don't work at all. If you want to destroy Saddam's weapons capability, that doesn't leave too many alternatives, does it?

12 **PAUL WOLFOWITZ** RISING UP Why support for rebel efforts to oust Saddam is America's only serious strategic option in the Gulf.

14 **JOHN N. HICKMAN** ADJUNCT U. The contracting-out fad has hit university faculties, and that's bad news for professors—and their students.

16 **STAN CROCK** FUERTH IN LINE As Al Gore's chief foreign policy adviser, Leon Fuerth is already a powerful behind-the-scenes player. And, if his boss wins in 2000, Fuerth could take center stage. Is he up to it?

18 **JASON ZENGERLE** TURLEY'S GIG Will a pundit-of-the-moment fade with Bimbroglio? Over his dead body.

20 **JONATHAN COHN** A MAN'S PLACE What a controversial custody dispute tells us about families, fathers, and the true meaning of feminism.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: IN THE MIDST OF LIFE *Meet Joe Black* finds a perfect role for Brad Pitt; *The Siege* is an ordinary film from an extraordinary director.

28 **ANN HULBERT** THE INFLUENCE OF ANXIETY Judith Rich Harris doesn't prove that peers usurp the place of parents. But her humility about child-rearing is the beginning of wisdom.

32 **STEVE KRONEN** POEM *Signs and Portents*

36 **DAVID RIEFF** HELL AND HUMANITARIANISM *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda* by Philip Gourevitch

42 **WENDY DONIGER** THE ANCIENT POSTMODERNS *Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India* by Roberto Calasso, translated by Tim Parks

46 **PETER BEINART** NEW HAVEN DIARIST: A SUPER MARKET

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CORRESPONDENCE

Crimes and misdemeanors

To the editors:
I am sure that all of us in the gay community can feel safe now that THE NEW REPUBLIC has proclaimed "there is scant evidence that local and state officials generally have deliberately failed to prosecute the murders of gay men or lesbians" ("The Hate Debate," November 2). In the real world, of course, the story is quite different. The straight community's reaction, exemplified in your editorial, has absolutely no comprehension of the fact that, in many areas of this nation, it is hunting season, and we, in the gay community, are the prey. Now that we have been educated by what happened to Matthew Shepard, are we to believe that we don't need to be protected by hate-crime laws?

ALAN H. ROSENBERG
Pacific Palisades, California

To the editors:
I agree with your editorial opposing the need for a federal hate-crime law. Passing more laws or adding more rights tends to alienate, postponing needed dialogue and interpersonal working together.

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE
Madison, Wisconsin

To the editors:
The First Amendment concerns that you raise about hate-crime laws were addressed by the Supreme Court in *Wisconsin* v. *Mitchell*, when it held hate-crime laws to be constitutional. Chief Justice Rehnquist, writing for a unanimous court, reasoned that a defendant's motive for committing a crime has traditionally been an important factor in sentencing. Finding that penalty enhancements are appropriate and longstanding, the chief justice cited Blackstone, who wrote that those crimes "which are the most destructive of the public safety and happiness" should be most severely punished.

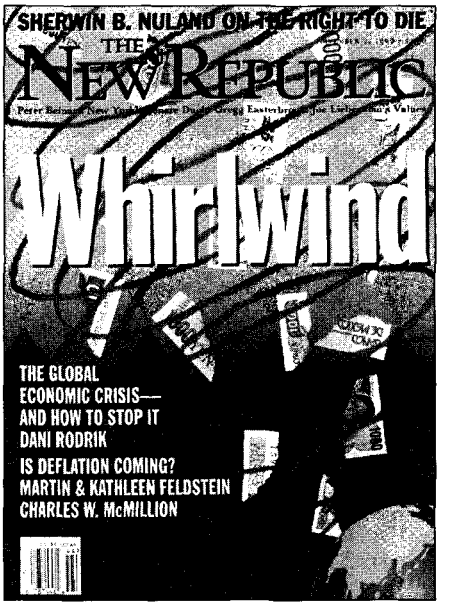
SAMUEL I. ROSENBERG
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

To the editors:
The argument that Matthew Shepard's killers would not have been deterred by hate-crime laws may well be true, but that is beside the point. The greatest deterrent impact hate-crime laws have is not in murder cases, where harsh sentences are already available. Rather, such laws are most commonly applied in assault and vandalism cases, where the law would not otherwise distinguish between a kid who spray paints "Tommy loves Sue" on a bridge and someone who defaces a synagogue with swastikas.

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN
National Director
Anti-Defamation League
New York, New York

Money for nothing

To the editors:
In "Money Laundering" (November 16), Charles Lane discussed the potential pitfalls of campaign-finance-reform legislation. Unfortunately, he distorted the section of the Shays-Meehan bill regarding campaign advertisements.


SHERWIN B. NULAND ON THE RIGHT TO DIE
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Whirlwind
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS— AND HOW TO STOP IT
DANI RODRIK
IS DEFLATION COMING?
MARTIN & KATHLEEN FELDSTEIN
CHARLES W. McMILLION

Nothing in the Shays-Meehan bill would prevent a group of citizens from running an advertisement. What the bill would do, in addition to banning soft money and strengthening enforcement, is widen the definition of a campaign ad, subject to campaign law.

Our federal election laws now require groups who pay for campaign advertisements to disclose the names of their contributors and the amount of money they spend. The Supreme Court has repeatedly found this constitutional, holding that citizens in a democracy have the right to know who's spending money to influence their votes.

Our federal laws also prohibit contributions from corporate treasuries (since 1907) and labor unions (since 1947). The Court has also upheld these restrictions. But, starting in the 1990s, groups got around these requirements. They bought ads that didn't say "Vote for" or "Vote against" but instead said things like, "Candidate Smith is a slum landlord.... Tell him to stop." The Democratic and Republican parties were equally crafty, spending tens of millions on ads that told the life stories of President Clinton and Senator Dole but that were supposedly not campaign ads, allowing the parties to use union and corporate money.

Under Shays-Meehan, corporations or unions would have to fund campaign advertisements through the political action committees they already have instead of using members' dues or shareholders' profits. These groups would still have the full protection of the First Amendment. If they want to send out voters' guides that highlight our good or bad votes, they don't have to report a thing. If they want to broadcast a campaign advertisement, criticizing or supporting a politician, they still have the full protection of the First Amendment to say anything they want. But, because they are directly trying to influence votes, they would have to raise money for these ads under existing federal election laws.

We like to call our campaign-ad provision the duck test. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck. The law ought to be able to treat these ads as campaign ads, and that's what Shays-Meehan does.

CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
MARTY MEEHAN
United States Congress
Washington, D.C.

Charles Lane replies:
Christopher Shays and Marty Meehan are right that their bill doesn't issue an outright ban on the campaign ads I described. But, by subjecting currently unregulated advertising to costly federal regulation, their bill would deter at least some political speech that would have occurred without it.

Penny wise

To the editors:
Patrick Clawson's "Cheap Sheikh" (October 26) claims that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have "neither saved nor invested [oil and gas revenue] for the lean years." In reality, GCC economies have invested significantly to diversify their economies and promote nonpetroleum industries, a goal that has been at the core of almost every one of their development plans.

Such efforts have included Kuwait's Reserve Fund for Future Generations, Dubai's establishment of the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone, and Saudi Arabia's development of industry, agriculture, and financial services. Also noteworthy is the effort to decrease reliance on expatriate labor by promoting education and training, a policy that has been pursued by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab

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Emirates, and Oman. While some of these efforts have failed because they were going against natural economic laws (such as Saudi Arabia's attempt to make the desert bloom), others, such as Dubai's free-trade zone, have succeeded. More generally, it is too early to evaluate the impact of what are, ultimately, long-term investments.

LAILA AL-HAMAD
Washington, D.C.

Patrick Clawson replies:

Twenty-five years after the oil price increase, signs of sustainable development in the GCC countries are few and far between. Nearly all development depends on subsidized inputs and cheap access to infrastructure, like Dubai's huge port built with oil revenue. Claims about reducing reliance on expatriate labor have been made for years, but few private firms hire locals voluntarily.

Wonderland

To the editors:

THE NEW REPUBLIC is to be congratulated for having stimulated a culturally interesting transatlantic debate. Richard Jenkyns's protracted assault on my beastly American invasion of the childhood domain he nostalgically defends as the last bastion of a sunny and unsoiled Englishness has, of course, a most venerable ancestry ("Phallus in Wonderland," October 26). Whether intentionally or not, he adopts the strident rhetoric of "Frauds on the Fairies," the 1853 essay in which Charles Dickens lamented that a phallic "hog of unwieldy proportions" had violated the "fairy flower garden" of childhood.

Dickens feared that Americans would cast Cinderella as a bloomers-wearing virago who, as queen, might extend the vote to all members of her sex. Jenkyns's similar horror at any deformation of a virginal "space" that he associated with Lewis Carroll's Oxford, however, was already anachronistic in 1853. Fairy tales never were the "pure" child-texts reinvented by Perrault and the Grimms. And, as I argue in *Ventures into Childland* and elsewhere, Victorian child-texts, and, indeed any child-text written by the former child we call a grown-up, inevitably involves a dialogue between adult and child selves.

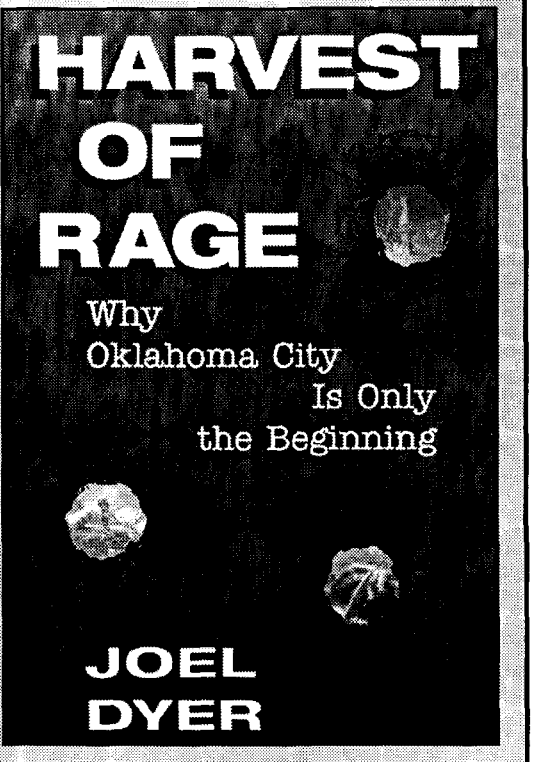
Jenkyns adopts Dickens's rhetoric of outrage to resist my documentation of a dialogue that was not only generational but also gendered. His review huffily denies the existence of a Victorian intertextual debate that ultimately pitted British women writers against male fantasists who had appropriated childhood

continued on page 45

HARVEST OF RAGE

WHY OKLAHOMA CITY IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

Joel Dyer



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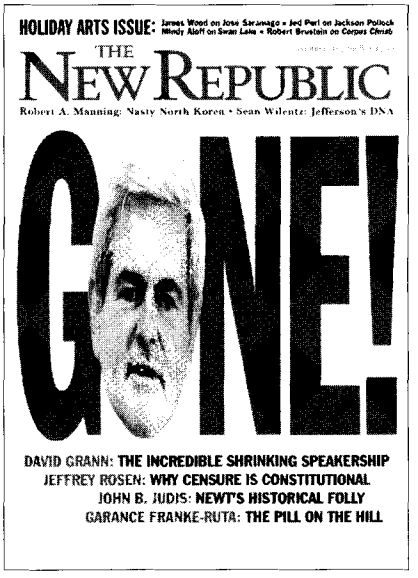
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 7, 1998

NO HAZARD

James Lee Witt, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has a stern message for Americans who live in flood plains. No longer will the federal government underwrite people's stubborn refusal to bend to the will of Mother Nature. Witt proposes eliminating federal subsidies that lower the cost of flood insurance by more than 60 percent for people who choose to live in areas susceptible to flooding. FEMA might also consider denying flood insurance to the several thousand homeowners who have already made two or more flood claims that exceed the value of their houses. In other words, folks who insist on building—and rebuilding—their homes on dangerous ground will have to do so without federal help. "People need to accept the responsibility and the consequences of their choice to live in high-risk areas," Witt declared.

Michel Camdessus, the chief of the International Monetary Fund, delivered a similar message of his own this week. Camdessus had traveled to Central America to assess the economic damage caused by the horrific storm known as Mitch. Officials in Nicaragua estimate that the winds and rain caused $1.5 billion in damage; the Hondurans figure that they may have suffered more than $4 billion in losses.

Faced with the daunting task of essentially rebuilding the second- and third-poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, the Hondurans and the Nicaraguans naturally asked Camdessus for assistance—primarily in the form of agreeing to forgive the two countries' debts to the IMF. Honduras currently owes $4.3 billion to foreign lenders; Nicaragua is in hock to the tune of more than $6 billion. Camdessus agreed that creditors should aid the two countries by rescheduling payment and other means, but he issued no unequivocal call for debt forgiveness by the IMF or anyone else. Instead, he offered a trust fund for the two countries, from which they can draw money to repay their foreign debts. But, no matter how ruined the two countries may have been, Camdessus essentially instructed, they must eventually pay their debts. Said one IMF official to NPR: "If you go around canceling debts, a country which has pursued better policies and has therefore kept its external debt at a much lower level will feel very much that it's being penalized."

At the heart of both Witt's and Camdessus's messages is the same issue: moral hazard. This is a fancy economics term for a dilemma inherent in all efforts at governmental compassion. Generous benefits to alleviate hardship today can encourage the very behavior that helped create the misery in the first place. Moral hazard is the bane of contemporary liberalism, but it's a reality. Indeed, the whole debate over how to move America's poor from welfare to work has been a kind of national seminar on moral hazard.

Witt was right when he recognized the moral hazard created by a federal disaster-relief policy that provides individuals no disincentive to build homes on flood plains. Rather than provide people with funds to continually rebuild their flood-ruined homes, Witt would prefer that FEMA give those homeowners money to relocate and build on higher ground.

But the moral hazard Camdessus seeks to guard against is not so apparent. True, forgiving Nicaragua's and Honduras's debts might encourage other desperately poor countries to demand the same generosity. And clearly it would be mistaken to enunciate an IMF policy that gives, say, Russia the idea that it's entitled to debt relief when it has manifestly failed to reform its economy. But surely the sheer suddenness and magnitude of the Mitch disaster distinguishes Central America's case from all others.

Can the IMF be worried that outright debt forgiveness would encourage future profligacy by Nicaragua and Honduras? Neither was asking for accelerated debt relief before Mitch. Indeed, Nicaragua had been rigorously adhering to an IMF-designed austerity plan so that it could pay annual debt service amounting to a staggering 40 percent of its yearly export earnings. And obviously there's no special moral hazard posed by bailing out countries that lie in the path of recurrent bad weather. Unlike homeowners who keep returning to a flood plain despite the offer of help to move elsewhere, Honduras and Nicaragua can't exactly pick up and relocate.

Fortunately, some of Honduras's and Nicaragua's creditors have a different view of moral hazard than the IMF does. France has unilaterally forgiven a debt of $100 million owed to it by both countries. Canada has suspended $20 million in Honduran debt. And the United States has suspended two years of debt payments from both countries, granting them $54 million of debt relief. U.S. policy should go even further, to include the canceling of all official debts and the encouragement of private creditors, American and otherwise, to do the same. The moral urgency far outweighs any possible moral hazard. •

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NOTEBOOK

MALAYSIAN MELEE: It's nice to know that there's at least one dictator in the world whom the Clinton administration isn't afraid to take on. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has run Malaysia for the past 17 years, though he is not what you would call a temperate man. He's a leading proponent of the canard that authoritarianism is an authentic expression of "Asian values." When his country's currency, the ringgit, crashed about a year ago, he blamed speculator George Soros and other Jews out to punish Malaysia because "the Jews are not happy to see the Muslims progress." More recently, he has responded to economic crisis with autarkic, and self-defeating, capital controls. And he has been repressing political freedom. He has jailed (and his police have savagely beaten) his former deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, who is an impressive embodiment of the point that not every Muslim politician in the Third World must be anti-Western. The official charges are corruption and sodomy. As a growing number of protesting Malaysians know, however, Ibrahim's real offense was to challenge official corruption. U.S. support for reform in Malaysia was dramatically demonstrated during the recent Asian-Pacific Economic Council meeting, first by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's intentionally well-publicized visit to Ibrahim's wife, and then by Vice President Al Gore's forceful speech in which he hailed the "brave people" who have rallied behind Ibrahim and invoked the incipient democracy movement's slogan, "*Reformasi.*" Carping immediately ensued about the undiplomatic bluntness of Gore's statements, mostly from Mahathir's government itself, but also from foreign businessmen eager to make deals with it. But Gore was merely giving Mahathir fair warning about a basic reality of the current crisis in Asia. Economic modernization and political modernization must go hand in hand. A failure to pursue the latter eventually retards the former. As President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea put it at the conference: "We now know why and how the crisis came. It was because of the collusive ties between politics and businesses, government-controlled financing, and widespread corruption." It follows that crises of crony capitalism are often accompanied by public pressure for more open and accountable government. No country illustrates this better than Mahathir's Malaysia, where a system of vast official favoritism, like Suharto's in Indonesia, proved consistent with growth for a while but has now begun to bump up against its own internal contradictions. The most important of these is the rise of a prosperous, educated middle class that isn't necessarily content to settle for however much political participation Mahathir deems sufficient. According to *The New York Times*, witnesses said Mahathir appeared deeply offended as he listened to Gore's speech. Good.

OBIT BIT: It is not right to speak ill of the dead, but sometimes it is awfully tempting. No, let us instead speak ill of the coverage of the dead. Kwame Toure, formerly Stokely Carmichael, died last week in Guinea at 57. And the American media suddenly became sentimental. The papers called him a "civil rights leader," which is precisely what he refused to be, preferring radicalism and the promotion of violence to the hard slog of democratic politics. They recalled that he coined the slogan "Black Power," trying to explain that it was only a catchy extremist jingle for the need to organize. Or, as the *Chicago Tribune* put it, "He believed in the all-American virtue of self-help." ("When you talk of Black Power," Toure told audiences, "you talk of building a movement that will smash everything Western civilization has created.") His anti-Zionism was duly noted, but his repeated crossings of the line into anti-Semitism were not. The most hilarious moistening of all occurred in *The Washington Post*, where J.Y. Smith wrote, "In 1968, Mr. Toure played an ambiguous role in the beginning of the riots that wracked Washington." Smith noted that Toure had appeared at Howard University, waving a gun and shouting, "Stay off the streets if you don't have a gun because there's going to be shooting." Now *that's* ambiguous. (Toure subsequently disappeared from the scene that he had inflamed. Maybe *that's* the ambiguity.) We're for remembrance, too. But can't the remembrance at least be true?

FOR GOD'S SAKE, JUST SAY NO: From an Associated Press item about Monica Lewinsky's deal to publish her memoir with Michael O'Mara Books and use Andrew Morton as ghostwriter: "O'Mara said there was a 'strong personal chemistry' between the former White House intern and Morton. 'We put the two of them together in a New York hotel room last week, and she said yes immediately.' " •

Why our Iraq policy won't work.

SHOW OF FARCE

By Patrick Clawson

The Clinton administration's Iraq policy has been to "keep Saddam in his box" by doing everything possible to keep U.N. inspectors and international economic sanctions in place. But actually Saddam has boxed us in. True, the sanctions must be having some effect, because Saddam complains about them so much. Indeed, they materially weaken his

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grip on power. They sharply limit his imports of conventional weapons (Iraq can't make many weapons parts on its own). And they impede the flow of goodies for Saddam's cronies—such as a liposuction machine classified by Iraq as a high-priority medical need that the U.N. refused to allow in.

But Saddam has also used the sanctions to create misery among his people and then blame the West. From 1991 through 1996, he refused to accept the U.N.-offered humanitarian-import program, with the not-surprising result that malnutrition became a serious problem. In the face of Iraqi propaganda about this, the United States agreed last February to a Security Council resolution allowing Saddam to export $10.5 billion in oil annually—more than Iraq's average $9.5 billion in exports during the 1980s. The money, spent under U.N. supervision, pays for much more than food and medicine—everything from oil-field equipment to electric plants.

With imports flooding into Iraq, the sanctions cannot do much to stop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs—and it is those programs that transform Saddam from a tinhorn dictator into a world-class threat. Only an eagle-eyed expert could distinguish civilian goods from misleadingly labeled WMD equipment. And the small team of U.N. monitors inspects only oil-for-food imports, not the more than $500 million a year in imports Iraq buys separately. According to Dennis Halliday, former administrator of the U.N. oil-for-food program, more than 1,000 trucks a day cross the Turkish border, of which not more than 40 were subject to U.N. inspection.

What to do about the sanctions? One route would be to change the sanctions regime. Saddam and his French and Russian friends have directed most of their energy to getting the oil export restrictions lifted. The irony is that these have no practical effect. Despite Security Council permission to export $10.5 billion worth of oil a year, Iraq can't produce more than $7 billion. Yet Saddam focuses on the oil export restrictions rather than the limitations that really matter, such as restrictions on what Iraq can import and a requirement that 30 percent of oil revenues be paid into a fund to compensate Iraq's victims. So maybe the oil export restriction is an area where the United States could compromise, because the result does not matter, anyway. On the other hand, perhaps it's smart to divert attention to the oil side-issue, because that keeps Saddam's friends at the U.N. fighting about something of no consequence. And, once the oil restrictions are off, Saddam would campaign to have the rest of the sanctions lifted.

One sanction that hurts U.S. interests is the restriction on travel to Iraq, which helps Saddam isolate his people from world opinion. Instead, the United States could encourage visitors of all sorts: congressmen, clergymen, journalists, students, even tourists. The more who go, the harder for Saddam's minders to tag along with them all. And the more Iraqis see of the outside world, the more they will realize that the United States cares more about their welfare than Saddam does.

If we cannot count on sanctions to affect Saddam's WMD programs, what about inspections? They too are only an imperfect tool. And they were never expected to be the centerpiece for disarming Iraq. The plan, as set out in the 1991 U.N. cease-fire resolution, was to compel Iraq to make "a declaration on the locations, amounts and types of all" biochemical and nuclear weapons including "all research, development, support, and manufacturing facilities related thereto." The inspections were to be a backup to verify the declaration. Instead, Saddam has shifted the burden of revealing the Iraqi WMD program onto the inspectors. Searching a haystack as large as Iraq for a needle as small as a bathtub full of anthrax is a gargantuan task. Meanwhile, the latest of Baghdad's several "full, final, and complete disclosures" was found "not credible" by independent experts consulted by UNSCOM (at Iraq's insistence).

Furthermore, the inspection regime can work only if backed by credible threats of force. When Saddam sees no threat, he sees no reason to cooperate. Early on, when Saddam had credible reason to fear U.S. strikes, his pattern was to "cheat and retreat," but, now that international support for strikes appears weak, it is "cheat and compromise." Each compromise buys the West less: Kofi Annan's February deal got only four months of inspections, and UNSCOM's decision to cancel planned inspections (at the private urging of the United States) this summer bought only a few weeks of inspections. Contrary to common wisdom, compromise, not the use of force, threatens inspections. The credible threat—and periodic use—of military force is what breathes life into UNSCOM.

Even if disclosure and inspection had worked, Iraq would retain the expertise and the facilities allowing it to produce biochemical weapons "in a matter of weeks," according to the CIA. Nuclear weapons would take only a couple of years. This means that, if Saddam ignores UNSCOM and invades Kuwait tomorrow, he could have biochemical weapons in less time than it took the United States to build up its forces for Desert Storm. There is a broad, unstated international consensus that Iraq would suffer terrible consequences if it used WMD in war but not on what to do if Saddam announces he possesses WMD and uses that as a means of coercion, for instance, to discourage those contemplating reversing some Iraqi aggression. That is not good enough: we need a clear policy, backed by our allies, that Iraqi WMD possession is a casus belli.

Ultimately, neither inspections nor sanctions get to the core of the problem, which is the nature of the Iraqi regime. At his November 15 press conference, President Clinton identified the only solution: installing a new regime in Baghdad that has democratic legitimacy and respects human rights. The question of the day becomes how to hasten the arrival of the new government. None

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of the available options is ideal. Providing military support for the main opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress, is a high-risk gamble, but it could deliver a high payoff: ending the Saddam problem, solving the Gulf security conundrum, and relieving Israel's fear of attack from the east. The option of supporting opposition-led military operations therefore deserves more serious attention from the administration than it has gotten.

PATRICK CLAWSON is the director for research at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and editor of its recent "Iraq Strategy Review."

Iraqi rebels with a cause.

RISING UP

By Paul Wolfowitz

> [O]ver the long term, the best way to address that threat is through a government in Baghdad—a new government—that is committed to represent and respect its people, not repress them; that is committed to peace in the region. Over the past year, we have deepened our engagement with the forces of change in Iraq.... We will intensify that effort, working with Congress to implement the Iraq Liberation Act ... to do what we can to make the opposition a more effective voice for the aspirations of the Iraqi people....
>
> —President Bill Clinton, November 15

The media treated these dramatic words, spoken the day after the president had called off the bombing of Iraq, as a major shift in U.S. policy. But, given the president's record—and the fact that Secretary of Defense William Cohen immediately added that the president "was not calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein"—we're entitled to wonder whether the administration really means business about helping the Iraqi opposition get rid of Saddam. And let's be clear. Toppling Saddam is the only outcome that can satisfy the vital U.S. interest in a stable and secure Gulf region, because, to a degree unique among contemporary tyrannies, the Iraqi regime *is* Saddam Hussein. This fact has critical moral, political, and even strategic implications.

Saddam is a war criminal. Though his envoys are received politely at the United Nations, he rules without a shred of democratic legitimacy—not even his family is safe from torture or execution. Saddam is the sworn enemy of every moderate Arab regime that contributed to his defeat in the Gulf war—and also of Jordan's King Hussein, who supported him during the war but has broken with him since. Like all gangsters, Saddam uses revenge to intimidate, and hence to accumulate, power. Why else did he plan to assassinate former President Bush in Kuwait in April 1993—despite President Clinton's hints of a new chapter in U.S.-Iraq relations? The message to America's former coalition partners was clear: Saddam Hussein gets even.

And the scale of Saddam's contemplated revenge far exceeds that of any gangster. He wants weapons that he didn't have when he invaded Kuwait—horrible weapons that could deter future American opposition through the threat of nuclear or biological attack. As long as Saddam remains in power, even the best inspection and monitoring regime can do no more than delay his unrelenting effort. Indeed, we might be worse off now if he *had* cooperated with inspectors, gotten relief from sanctions, and then resumed his programs with more money and less monitoring. But the fear and terror that have kept Saddam in power through two disastrous wars also constitute his Achilles' heel—and America's point of leverage. The vast majority of Iraqis want him out, though only those with a death wish say so openly. We must help them.

A golden opportunity to take advantage of Iraqi opposition to Saddam was lost in the month following the Gulf war. I argued then that it was a terrible mistake to allow Iraq to fly armed helicopters against the Kurds in northern Iraq and against the Shia in the south. By then, it was already clear that the war had changed from a conflict over Kuwait to a conflict with Saddam and that he would be dangerous as long as he remained in power. Certainly our Saudi allies understood this. They told Secretary of State James Baker, on his trip to the Gulf just after the cease-fire, that getting rid of Saddam was critical.

But, for all his otherwise skillful and courageous leadership in the Gulf war, President Bush failed to heed this advice. One factor was the widely held belief that Saddam could not last very long after such a humiliating military defeat. Another equally mistaken belief was that we could do nothing to remove Saddam short of marching on Baghdad and occupying Iraq—something Bush was reluctant to order, given how much resistance Congress had put up on the mere goal of forcing Saddam out of Kuwait.

Whatever the reasoning, it was a serious mistake. Still, from April 1991 onward, President Bush acted with a resolve that his successor has lacked. Bush met Iraqi challenges to UNSCOM inspectors or to no-fly zones over Iraq with the threat of force and, when necessary, its actual use. Most important—and of great relevance to today's debate over supporting the Iraqi opposition—when the tragedy that Saddam was inflicting on the Kurds in northern Iraq became evident, Bush moved decisively with American forces, including ground forces, to create a sanctuary. And it took only a modest commitment of troops—a few combat battalions, all of them light infantry. The Iraqi army had no stomach to confront the U.S. Air Force once again. In one incident, a single American colonel with an

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assault rifle ordered an entire Iraqi armored brigade to withdraw.

During the campaign, the candidate Al Gore accused Bush of "moral blindness" for the way the war ended. Yet, on the eve of his inauguration, President-elect Clinton told the world that he was a Baptist who believed in "deathbed conversions," and if Saddam Hussein would change his behavior the new administration might be willing to deal with him.

In the nearly six years since, President Clinton and his administration have missed a number of opportunities to act on the fact that Saddam's continued rule is incompatible with peace in the Gulf. They responded to Iraq's attempted assassination of George Bush with a minimal cruise missile attack that introduced the concept of "pin prick" into the American military lexicon. Worst of all, despite explicit promises from the vice president and then-national security adviser Anthony Lake, President Clinton did nothing when Saddam launched an offensive against opposition forces in northern Iraq in 1996. Clinton announced that the north was of no strategic importance and launched another irrelevant "pin prick" strike in the south.

As support for the Iraqi opposition has grown in Congress, culminating in the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act in October, the administration has continued to display paralyzing ambivalence. Although the president signed the act and spoke well of it, administration officials told reporters "on background" that the bill was "idiocy" and that the Iraqi opposition was "feckless." Marine General Anthony Zinni, commander of U.S. Gulf forces, was even authorized to express the view that "a weak, fragmented, chaotic Iraq" would be more dangerous than Saddam's continuation in power and to complain that the opposition isn't "viable."

And then there's the Bay of Pigs analogy—a particularly weak argument. As threatening to us and to his own people as Castro was in 1961, there is no comparison between his tyranny and a Saddam Hussein who gasses his subjects and buries murdered prisoners in mass graves. Even more pertinent, there is no comparison between the fantasy that the Cuba of 1961 would erupt in massive revolt and the reality that large-scale rebellion already did break out in Iraq in 1991. The northern third of the country remains a stronghold of opposition to Saddam. His troops patrol only fearfully in southern Iraq, even after the mass killings Saddam has used to flush out Shia opposition. Nor is there any comparison between what the U.S. Air Force might have done to help the Cuban exiles and what it actually did to Iraqi armor in 1991—and what Saddam's generals know it could do again.

To be sure, U.S. inaction when Saddam attacked the Iraqi opposition in the north in 1996 does roughly parallel President Kennedy's failure to provide sustained air cover for the exile army's landing in Cuba. If the assumption is that we cannot be counted on to deliver the support that we promise, then indeed it would be reckless to encourage people to believe that it would be forthcoming. It is odd, though, to hear the Bay of Pigs analogy invoked by national security adviser Sandy Berger, who has publicly warned about the danger of disappointing an armed Iraqi opposition. Presumably, Berger is one of the people in a position to decide whether the U.S. would honor its commitments.

Still, this is very different from contending that the U.S. *could* not create a secure zone in southern Iraq, from which Saddam's armor would be excluded—as Operation Provide Comfort did in northern Iraq. Such a secure zone is critical to the strategy embodied by the Iraq Liberation Act and to developing a viable opposition.

At day's end, a "viable" opposition depends on American credibility, and that will be difficult to reestablish since anti-Saddam forces believe the United States has already abandoned them twice, in 1991 and in 1996. A first step would be for the administration to stop sending confusing rhetorical signals. A second would be to pursue Saddam's indictment as a war criminal, while challenging his claim to Iraqi assets and oil. Ultimately, though, the U.S. will have to provide weapons—which the Iraq Liberation Act authorizes but which the administration seems to oppose. And it will take American forces to create a protected area in which opposition forces can organize and to which units from Saddam's army can defect. This policy is risky. But it is less risky than the present course, which is leading us to the day that we are obliged to face Saddam ourselves, when he is armed with weapons of unparalleled destructiveness.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ, dean of the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, was undersecretary of defense from 1989 to 1993.

University professors get outsourced.

ADJUNCT U.

By John N. Hickman

Patricia Cronin, an adjunct professor of art at New York City's Cooper Union, sets out into the rain, dragging two heavy duffel bags full of still life subjects and lighting equipment for her water-color class. You might think such a beloved professor, hailed by *The New York Times* as a "complex and provocative" artist, could avoid this hassle, but Cronin is an adjunct professor—an academic migrant hired by the semester and paid by the course. She has no office and no place to store her equipment. She scrapes

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together rent by teaching at three or four schools, sometimes all in the same day. And, as she heaves the rain-soaked bags onto the subway train for the long commute to Cooper Union, she becomes a walking reminder that the ivory tower isn't the academic haven of yore. Adjuncts and part-time professors, once a stopgap solution to unexpected enrollment or a temporary fix for lack of expertise in a particular academic field, now account for nearly half of all American professors. And this development has changed the nature of higher education, mostly for the worse.

Adjuncts are now ascendant everywhere from state schools like the University of Colorado at Boulder, where use of part-time faculty has doubled since 1991, to the University of Pennsylvania, where, system-wide, part-time instructional and research faculty tripled from 1,015 in 1991 to 3,719 in 1995. Even Harvard hires an elite squad of part-timers to teach in its extension school and expository writing program, although it's primarily the two-year schools and smaller, state-supported colleges that have seen the most dramatic increases.

Most university administrators claim they are merely doing the best they can with shrinking budgets. And it's true that state and local funding for higher education has steadily declined over the past decade. By paying adjuncts a few thousand dollars a course and by keeping benefits to a minimum, institutions can save 60 to 75 percent on faculty costs—the same logic behind corporate downsizing. But are faculty salaries the most logical place to tighten the belt? For example, though former Northeastern University Provost Michael Baer insists that "if we wanted to increase our full-time numbers, the costs would be prohibitive," his school is planning construction of a $50 million, 185-room dormitory in the style of luxury condominiums with kitchens and private bathrooms.

Of course, the growth of adjunct faculty also reflects the influence of market forces. Even as demand for new, full-time professors has dropped, the supply of aspiring academics has grown. In the late '80s and early '90s, more students than ever rushed into graduate school, and newly minted Ph.D.s increased by 40 percent. Now, aspiring professors are lining up for part-time positions once considered untouchable. Barbara Wolf, an independent filmmaker, actually produced a documentary called *Degrees of Shame*, which went so far as to compare adjunct professors to migrant farm workers.

Whatever its cause, though, the trend toward adjunct faculty might be more significant for what it's doing to students than to professors. "Frankly, the adjunct sob stories make me sick," says P.D. Lesko, head of the National Adjunct Faculty Guild. "The real question is competence. How well can the person teach?"

On the one hand, adjuncts are surprisingly prolific in their publishing. And, although adjuncts are less likely than full-time professors to hold Ph.D.s, they are frequently better teachers because they can worry less about curriculum planning and research. According to the few studies on this topic that exist, students on average are no more or less satisfied with adjunct professors than they are with full-time, permanent ones.

But, while students might sometimes appreciate having professors who aren't so caught up in their research, the fact that adjunct faculty members have no time for their own intellectual development hurts the students in the long run because those faculty members end up falling behind in their fields—which inevitably affects what they teach. In addition, adjuncts frequently receive less institutional support—e-mail accounts, secretarial and computer services, peer review—than their full-time colleagues do. And, without these resources, even the most talented professors teach at a distinct disadvantage. In protest, last February, one Washington state adjunct drove his 1979 Saab onto the statehouse steps with the sign "TYPICAL PART-TIME FACULTY OFFICE." Sibyl Cohen, an adjunct philosophy professor at Temple University, was once locked out of her small office mid-term. A full-time professor had annexed it. "For a few days, I couldn't even get to my class notes," she says.

Don't forget, too, that part-time faculty members are seriously overworked. At $1,500 per course (the typical salary for an adjunct), just making it to the national poverty line means teaching four or five courses a semester—more than double what many full-time professors teach—usually at two or more campuses. Cohen, well into her seventies, had almost 800 essays to grade during one term; University of Cincinnati adjunct Mark Lehman teaches four sections of freshman English, which produce about 500 papers every quarter. For Susan Stoltzfus, an adjunct teacher in Washington state, teaching four courses meant four hours of commuting per day. Figuring in the cost of gas and child care, Stoltzfus calculated she was actually losing money teaching.

Not all adjuncts are making a full-time career out of part-time appointments. In fact, a slim majority, 51 percent, prefers to teach part-time. But, as full-time jobs dry up and new Ph.D.s continue to flood the market, even more academics might be forced into adjunct teaching as a career. And it's difficult for all of these under-resourced, overworked professors to serve their students. For example, giving students individual attention is an essential component of good teaching. But, according to Ernst Benjamin of the American Association of University Professors, 41 percent of part-timers at four-year colleges have no office hours, compared with only nine percent of full-time faculty. It's not that they don't want to take time for individual instruction, according to the adjuncts I interviewed, their schedules are just too hectic.

Full-time faculty members at four-year colleges are also much more likely to give essay exams—proof, Benjamin says, that full-timers have more time to spend on each course. And, although part-time professors at four-year schools spend slightly more time each week in the classroom than full-time faculty members do—7.1 hours for adjuncts to 6.8 hours for full-timers—they spend only half as much school-related time—8.2 to 16.3 hours a week—outside of the classroom on things

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like developing lectures and grading papers.

Teaching semester-to-semester presents even more problems when adjuncts must worry about next term's reappointment. Not only does this "sword of Damocles" policy further compromise research, but it also erodes the ability to teach creatively. Stray from the syllabus, teach controversial works, or venture an excessive number of low grades, and next semester's job might be in jeopardy, adjuncts say. "Good teachers need to take risks, and this really isn't possible when you're an adjunct," says Karen Thompson, an adjunct labor leader at Rutgers University. And, Lesko adds, how can a professor teach when her only evaluation comes from her students? "I've heard stories about adjuncts giving nothing but Bs," she says. "They were so afraid of losing their appointment that they didn't even bother to teach and just tried to keep the students happy."

There are no easy answers to academia's over-dependence on part-time faculty. Labor leaders agitating for higher adjunct pay and better working conditions run into the problem all labor organizers do—by making part-time faculty less affordable, they could effectively argue their constituents out of jobs. And, when universities hire fewer adjuncts, they defeat one of their original, and loftier, goals: putting more teachers in the classroom. The challenge is to find a middle ground where adjunct salaries and benefits support attentive, dynamic teaching, while keeping universities financially sound. Already, individual schools have started down this path, allocating more funds for face-to-face teaching and preparing Ph.D.s for nonacademic careers. But the best hope still lies with informed and concerned parents and students. They've paid into the world's best system of higher education, and they deserve the best out of it.

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Gore's foreign policy guru.

FUERTH IN LINE

By Stan Crock

President Clinton's decision to abort air strikes against Iraq was hardly based on the unanimous counsel of his advisers. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Defense Secretary William Cohen opposed backing down. And, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, so did Vice President Al Gore. That would stand to reason. Gore's chief foreign policy adviser is Leon Fuerth, a man who has long advocated a hard line against Iraq.

Thanks to Gore, the 59-year-old Fuerth has become a key figure in administration foreign policy circles. In his memoir, *To End a War*, diplomat Richard Holbrooke calls Fuerth "one of those powerful but rarely seen people who play major roles behind the scene in Washington." For a vice presidential aide, the former foreign service officer has an unusually prominent position as a member of the top national security policymaking group known as the Principals Committee, whose members include Albright, Cohen, and national security adviser Sandy Berger. "No one would make a decision without including him," says Ashton Carter, a former Pentagon official. In the event that Gore wins the presidency in 2000, Fuerth is favored to be national security adviser.

While Fuerth wasn't heavily involved in the recent Middle East peace accord, he is a crucial player in such areas as the Balkans and Iraq. He was the unsung architect and manager of the original economic sanctions against Serbia and advocated ratcheting up pressure against the Milosevic regime over Kosovo. He champions the administration's controversial plan for a Central Asian oil pipeline. And, though the tough stance he advocates against Iraq has yet to be fully adopted by the administration, as this weekend's near air strike illustrates, his position seems to be gaining support. Even some Republican critics of the Clinton administration think highly of Fuerth, perhaps because he's that rare bird, a non-Southern Democratic hawk.

Fuerth has his detractors, too. He can be socially awkward, and some staffers complain he can be downright unpleasant. Some senior officials also gripe that Fuerth is a quirky intellectual who spends too much time on peripheral obsessions such as the environment, though that may stem from a duty to pursue Gore's preoccupations. Fuerth's insulation from politics is another knock—and again it seems a result of Gore's approach. "Early on in our relationship, he told me just to tell him what I thought was best for the country and leave the politics to him," Fuerth recalls. This sometimes has an upside. Back in 1991 many of Gore's aides warned him to forget his shot at the White House if he bucked his party and voted in favor of President George Bush's plan to bomb Iraq. Fuerth, however, argued that the war was good policy, and Gore, to his subsequent benefit, followed Fuerth's advice.

But there's also a downside to ignoring political considerations. Peering only through a foreign policy lens, Fuerth failed to avert flaps over the vice president's 1997 trip to China and a Buddhist temple fund-raiser. (Fuerth's only fear about that was whether any pro-Taiwan activists might be on hand to offend China.) In some ways, Fuerth is the mirror image of Sandy Berger, who is more of a smooth Washington operator than a strategist.

The possibility that Fuerth could succeed Berger is heady stuff for a latchkey kid from Queens. Fuerth was eight when his father, an ice-cream-truck driver, died—leaving his mother to work long hours to support her only child. After graduating from the highly competitive Brooklyn Technical High School, he majored in English at New York University, then stayed on in the

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history Ph.D. program. But, with money running out, Fuerth aborted the doctorate in 1968 to move to Washington, D.C., with his wife and twin daughters.

At the State Department, he dove into the intelligence world and the arcane details of weapons of mass destruction. After a posting in Zagreb, he held a succession of jobs involving arms control, policy planning, and NATO. By 1979, he had another set of twin daughters and a new job on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. There he met a young congressman from Tennessee named Al Gore. They performed a mind-meld during a yearlong tutorial Fuerth gave Gore on the technical nuances of nuclear warfare. When Gore moved to the Senate in 1984, Fuerth followed as his national security aide and now is Gore's longest-serving staffer.

These days Fuerth executes strategy through a novel Clintonite foreign policy apparatus: binational commissions with countries such as Russia and Egypt, whose goal is to slash red tape impeding trade and investment. Cochaired by Gore and his foreign counterparts, with Fuerth as executive director, these back channels are "a very useful kind of mechanism," says Daniel O'Flaherty, vice president of the National Foreign Trade Council. When U.S. oil companies needed help negotiating a production-sharing agreement with Moscow, for example, they sought out Fuerth. (Though Gore persuaded then-Russian Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko to back the resulting production accord, Russia's political turmoil has since left the plan in limbo.)

Back when the commission was cochaired by Kiriyenko's predecessor, Viktor Chernomyrdin, it launched an immunization program that has since cut diphtheria cases in Russia by 65 percent. The panel also averted a trade war by halting a Russian official's effort to slap quotas on U.S. frozen chicken legs. And it helped expand joint ventures between the two countries in the commercial-space business. "If we didn't do everything we could when this opportunity was with us," Fuerth says, "that's what we would be blamed for by history."

But, though these micro-projects may have been all that was feasible, they ultimately proved an inadequate foundation for the economic edifice that Russia desperately needed. One problem was that, because Gore was dealing with an apparatchik like Chernomyrdin, the micro-projects weren't wedded to larger macroeconomic reforms. In addition, while the United States was hoping to emulate the post-World War II approach to Europe, that would have required another Marshall Plan. But Washington lacked the money, and Moscow lacked business infrastructure and reliable government institutions. Meanwhile, the administration remained resolutely bullish, ignoring the fact that the increases it boasted in private property, capital inflows, and the productive capacity of Russia only seemed large in contrast to the country's low starting point. Still, many analysts believe there's little Fuerth and company could have done differently even if they had been more realistic.

Fuerth's stand on unilateral trade sanctions reveals a moralistic streak tempered by pragmatism. Take what seemed an easy call: whether a $2 billion multinational gas project in Iran violated the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. It clearly did, and Fuerth, who contends sanctions have symbolic and moral significance, initially wanted to use the law against the investors: France's Total, Russia's Gazprom, and Malaysia's Petronas. Others argued this would offend the European Union. And both sides realized sanctions would be toothless because the companies had already severed economic ties with the United States. Yet Fuerth managed to maximize the leverage that the threat of sanctions gave him—convincing the Europeans to tighten export controls on equipment with both military and commercial applications and winning a detailed Russian plan to curb weapons exports.

While Washington exempted from sanctions similar future development projects in Iran, the pledge didn't extend to something that worries Fuerth even more: Western oil companies' investment in a trans-Iran pipeline for Caspian Sea oil. "Everybody concerned would be better off if there is a route that gets this stuff out into the world that is not dependent on what is happening in Tehran," he says. Still, it's far from clear that the route will be the one Fuerth and the administration are pushing. This option—a pipeline running from Baku in Azerbaijan to Ceyhan in Turkey—is the most expensive on the table. And, with oil prices low, more oil coming on the market from existing sites, and the high cost of exploring in a landlocked area, the market may never support the project. Meanwhile, the administration is spending enormous diplomatic capital and aligning itself with autocratic regimes.

It remains to be seen whether Fuerth can learn from such mistakes as he prepares for the possibility of a more prominent appointment. However, there are at least some signs that he is developing better political antennae. Back in 1995, Fuerth warned the White House to stay away from Roger Tamraz, a Democratic contributor with a questionable business background who was trying to promote his own idea for a Caspian Sea oil pipeline. (Fuerth was ignored, much to the White House's subsequent chagrin.) In addition, one source familiar with White House deliberations says Fuerth is skeptical of a bipartisan Senate request for a review of Cuba policy because of the political downside to Gore in 2000.

That could cause tension with some Clintonites who are mulling the idea as part of establishing a non-Bimbroglio legacy. But Fuerth would be wise to stick to his instincts. If he helps make Gore's foreign policy experience a campaign issue in 2000, it could provide the vice president with an edge against, say, a Republican governor with little international background. And that could thrust Fuerth into the forefront. Having mastered the rare art of obscure prominence, Fuerth will have to learn how to perform in the national spotlight.

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A pundit in his twilight.

TURLEY'S GIG

By Jason Zengerle

The man on my voice mail sounded worried. It was George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley, one of the Lewinsky scandal's most ubiquitous TV talking heads. He had called over the weekend—taking time out, not from MSNBC, but from a wedding in Florida—to say that, five weeks after refusing to cooperate with a story I was writing about him, he'd changed his mind.

"Something's come up that has sort of encouraged me to change my view on cooperating with any type of profile piece, and I can explain it to you," he told the machine. "The long and short of it is that I've been a critic of Steve Brill's since he first put out his publication [*Brill's Content*], and he is doing a profile piece, personally. And the indications from people he's interviewed are that he's been extremely hostile and he hasn't been particularly balanced, as you might imagine. If you're still interested in doing a profile piece, I'm willing to cooperate with one. And I want someone like you that I haven't worked with before, who'll take a neutral position. All I'm looking for is someone who's going to be fair.... There are a couple of things that Brill seems to be pursuing, and I would like to just simply get all the facts to someone who will look at it neutrally. If you agree with the critics, then you should publish that, but I'm convinced I can show you that they're just false." Then my voice mail reached its capacity and did something few of the professor's television opponents have managed to do—cut him off in mid-sentence.

I was intrigued. What were those "couple of things" Brill was pursuing? More generally, why all the panic from someone who, at that moment, stood at the top of the Bimbroglio pundit heap? A fierce critic of President Clinton, Turley is almost as much of a scandal icon as Monica Lewinsky herself. His academic mien and principled opinions, accented by a handsome face creased into a seemingly permanent expression of concern, were prized by everyone from Tim Russert to Jim Lehrer. Congressional Republicans, excited at finding one liberal Democrat who agrees that Clinton should go, have even sought his advice and testimony on constitutional issues.

So I acceded to Turley's plea. Over the next two or three weeks, we spoke a dozen times, on background and on the record. His secretary faxed me practically any document I asked for. I was even invited to attend one of his classes. But, when it was all over, I had reached a conclusion that probably won't especially please Turley or, for that matter, his nemesis Brill. If Turley's rise illustrates anything, it's not some horrible decline in the standards of today's Monica-crazed media. Nor is Turley more of a phony than anyone else in Washington. Rather, it's the simple human reality that, the higher some people rise in the pundit pantheon, the more intensely they fear tumbling back down to mortal status.

Thirty-seven-year-old Jonathan Turley has been building toward his Monica moment for a long time. He did his first legal commentary back when he was a mere clerk for a federal appeals court judge in Lafayette, Louisiana, parlaying a law-review article into a local TV interview about how televangelists like Jimmy Swaggart could be prosecuted under the RICO statute. Later, as an assistant professor of law at Tulane University, he provided quotes on peripheral legal matters for second-tier newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune*.

But Turley's 1990 move to G.W. placed him just a local phone call away from the networks' Washington bureaus. Soon, Turley was on ABC analyzing the Rodney King videotape. On CNN, he opined about the au pair murder trial, the Unabomber trial, and various Supreme Court rulings. He chatted with Phil Donahue about the incarcerated elderly. Turley even took a brief spin on the O.J. merry-go-round, offering commentary for ABC's "Primetime Live" on the first day of Simpson's preliminary hearing.

Turley then cut his O.J. career short: sensing a media circus, he fretted that any association with the case might harm his reputation as an "academic commentator." But, apparently, that thought did not recur when the semen-stained Lewinsky scandal hit the airwaves. Since January, he has been on ABC's "This Week," "Face the Nation," "Meet the Press," "Nightline," CNBC's "Hardball," MSNBC's "The Big Show," "Larry King Live," "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," "Crossfire," "Fox News Sunday," "Today," "Good Morning America," and "CBS This Morning." And that's a partial list.

Through it all, Turley has continued to maintain not only a full load of teaching work but also an active file

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of pro bono cases—cases whose only common characteristic seems to be their telegenicity. He's represented 23 former grand jurors who, complaining of a government cover-up, went public with testimony that pointed to environmental crimes at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons facility in Colorado. He's filed a constitutional challenge on behalf of Jim Nicholson, the highest-ranking CIA officer ever convicted of espionage. He's defended Eric Foretich in his bitter and celebrated custody battle with his ex-wife Elizabeth Morgan. And he's handled the case of former workers at the government's top-secret military base in Nevada, Area 51, who claim that they were exposed to dangerous chemicals.

Depending on how you look at it, this is either the resumé of a brilliant legal polymath or the scattershot career pattern of a camera hound who has no particular expertise. And that's where *Brill's Content* comes in. The new media gadfly puts a lot of stock in the credentials of the folks who bring us the news. It publishes a regular feature under the headline "HOW DO THEY KNOW?" that lists and assesses the academic and journalistic resumés of various reporters and commentators. Thus, what frightened Turley was that the magazine might repeat the charge—first made by Clinton defender Judge Abner Mikva on "Fox News Sunday" back in July and since muttered under the breath of many a faculty colleague—that Turley is nothing but an environmental torts lawyer.

JONATHAN TURLEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It was precisely to thwart this supposed threat that Turley furnished me with a copy of his c.v., plus all the explanations that I asked for. Is Turley really guilty of resumé inflation? Turley asserts, for example, that "he has litigated on every federal court level from trial court to the Supreme Court." This is true, but Turley admitted to me that his only work at the Supreme Court level consisted of filing unsuccessful petitions for certiorari; he never actually argued a case before the High Court. Similarly, Turley claims that he "has held positions in all three branches of the federal government, including work in both houses of Congress and the National Security Agency." Again, literally true, but his congressional experience consists of a page job in high school, an internship in college, and, as a professor, behind-the-scenes consultations with members and testimony he has given to various congressional committees. His NSA job was an "intermittent" post he held while in law school.

Of course, the real point—which seems to have escaped both Turley and his nemeses—is that each of these boasts would be a paltry one, even if unambiguously true. In terms of Turley's—or anyone else's—qualifications to discuss the law on television, what difference would it make to have worked in "all three branches of the federal government"? At worst, then, Turley is guilty of aggressive self-promotion. Around Washington, that's about as unusual as, say, civil perjury.

The issue seems especially absurd in the context of Bimbroglio punditry, which rarely gets into the finer points of constitutional law. "I don't look to see what courses he took in college," concedes a TV producer who has booked Turley. "If somebody's a law professor, that's good enough." For TV, all Turley really needs are a camera-friendly face and a shtick. And Turley's shtick is perfect: liberal law professor reaches reluctant but principled conclusion that his party's president is unfit for office.

But I doubt Turley sees the absurdity in the whole situation. He sure didn't manage to laugh along with Mark Glaze. Not long ago, the third-year G.W. law student played a naughty little prank on Turley. Glaze, who is not a student of Turley's, called Turley's secretary asking to meet with the professor. He then had a friend call posing as an ABC producer. Turley returned the "producer's" call but not the student's.

The Washington Post reported the hoax in the back pages of its business section. Turley responded with a letter to the editor that was almost longer than the original item. Turley offered an elaborate justification for

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his failure to return Glaze's call, accused Glaze of "unethical" behavior, and chided the *Post* for its "lack of judgment" in publishing the story. Turley also fired off a full-page letter to the G.W. law school newspaper—not to mention the three blistering memos he sent to Glaze.

When Al Hunt spoke with Turley to tell him that he planned to recount Glaze's hoax as his "Outrage of the Week" on CNN's "Capital Gang," Turley was incensed. "There was yelling and screaming," Hunt recalls. "He told me I was hostile to him, and that's why I was doing this as an 'Outrage.' I said, 'I'm not hostile. This is the second time I've ever talked to you.'"

Then there was a tiny, loosely sourced *Washingtonian* item about *The New York Times* Washington bureau's purported policy of prohibiting reporters from quoting the overexposed Turley. Turley's indignant letters about that one have sent the *Washingtonian* scurrying for its lawyers. Turley insists that there is no policy, and Mike Oreskes, the *Times*' bureau chief, backs him up. But, if there is a policy, even an informal one, it's extremely doubtful that the *Times* would admit to it, and it is a fact that Turley has not been quoted on the Lewinsky scandal by a member of the *Times*' Washington bureau since March. Still, in one of his letters to *Washingtonian* responding to that point, Turley actually tallied up quotes in the *Times* from other Bimbroglio talking heads: "Stuart Taylor (who was not quoted for a virtually identical period); Cynthia Alksne (who has never been quoted); Paul Rothstein (who has been quoted only three times since 1996); Bradford Berenson (who has been quoted only once); and Richard Ben-Veniste (who has not been quoted in an article since July 1998). Do these commentators also have special, bizarre policies of exclusion?"

A better question might be: How much longer will Turley's run last? Turley made it sound like the *Brill's Content* article could bring his pundit career crashing down in days. I called Brill, who seemed well aware of the professor's panic. "He seems to think that we're doing our next cover about him," Brill clucked. "He has delusions of grandeur." Brill, who naturally denied any ill will toward Turley, went on to explain that his magazine was preparing a piece for its February issue that will list 15 or 20 Lewinsky scandal pundits together with summaries of what they've said, who they are, and how they've gotten on television. "We're not doing a big piece on him," Brill said.

When I told Turley about this, he seemed to oscillate from aggrievement (it was his understanding that it was supposed to be a profile piece), to relief (could my story have scared off Brill?), and, finally, to suspicion. "This is quintessentially Steve Brill," he cautioned me. "I'm not so sure he's not going to still run it." •

When feminism meets at-home fatherhood.

A MAN'S PLACE

By Jonathan Cohn

A few years ago, Alex Hector and Roberta Young seemed like just another affluent couple in Coral Gables, Florida, a neighborhood of imported cars and manicured tropical landscaping just south of downtown Miami. Alex was a successful attorney at one of the city's most prominent firms. Roberta spent her days at home, fiddling with the occasional moneymaking idea, remodeling the house, and caring for the couple's two young daughters.

Alex lived a litigator's overcommitted life. He woke the kids in the morning, fixed breakfast or drove them to school when he could, then helped with homework until their bedtime. In between came marathon work days, many of them out of town. He was a devoted parent who loved his children very much, but free time was scarce—and once or twice a month he would treat himself to a late matinee, even if it meant possibly missing an opportunity for dinner at home with the kids.

Roberta was in many ways the quintessential at-home mother. She volunteered at school and helped coach the soccer team; when the older daughter had trouble getting into the Brownies, she rallied the neighborhood's moms and started a new troop. She had an architect's degree and, it was said, great potential. But it had been years since she'd held a full-time job, and her friends believed that she'd never go back.

It was a convenient arrangement, but not an altogether happy one. Alex thought Roberta was taking advantage of him—after all, they had a nearly full-time housekeeper, paid for by Alex's salary. He wanted his wife to get a real job and take some of the breadwinning burden off him. Roberta, meanwhile, thought raising the kids *was* a real job—even with the housekeeper—and resented what she said was Alex's dismissive attitude toward her parenting. All in all, it was a run-of-the-mill marital dispute. And, when the two got

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divorced, the custody issue seemed straightforward enough. Like most states, Florida now favors giving primary custody of children to the parent who has been the main caregiver, regardless of gender or financial circumstance. So, assuming a judge determined that Roberta really was an at-home parent, she would get custody.

But the Hector-Young case did not unfold in this ordinary way because, in one very important respect, their household had not been ordinary: Alex Hector was actually Alice Hector, and Roberta Young was Robert Young. In other words, the breadwinner in this family was the mother; the at-home parent the father. And, while that fact might have made them just another South Florida curiosity if the marriage had held together, in the context of their divorce case it twisted the legal conventions, turned the state's judicial system against itself, and, in the process, fueled the national debate over families and the true meaning of feminism.

First, a trial judge awarded custody to Alice, arguing that she was the more stable and permanent presence in the children's lives. Then, an appellate panel overruled the trial judge: testimony, the judges ruled, showed that Robert had spent more time with the kids in the past—and would likely do so in the future. The full court of appeals has since granted Alice's petition for a rehearing, and, with the final outcome in doubt, political advocates from all over the country have seized upon the case as an allegory. Feminists believe Alice is the paradigmatic working mother being penalized because she has career aspirations; traditionalists believe Alice is just another working mother abandoning her children and looking for society's validation. The case has made all the major newspapers—not to mention the obligatory segment on NBC's "Dateline."

At times, Alice and Robert insist their case is not a parable. So do their lawyers. But they're not entirely persuasive, and not only because both sides have invoked broader political arguments when it has served their purposes. The fact is, this *is* a parable. Only few of the outsiders invoking it seem to grasp its meaning, either because the facts are too complicated—or, more likely, because the real moral of this story doesn't quite fit the preconceptions of either family-values conservatism or liberal feminism.

In the late '80s, sociologist Kathleen Gerson set out to discover whether the flood of women into the workplace had altered the familiar division of labor at home. Her book *No Man's Land: Men's Changing Commitments to Family and Work* suggested a mixed reality. Most women still bore a disproportionate share of home and child care responsibilities—even when both parents worked equal hours or when the women worked more than the men. This finding confirmed the conclusions of another well-respected sociologist, Arlie Russell Hochschild, whose highly publicized book *The Second Shift* highlighted the plight of women who work full-time hours during the day—only to pull a second shift of parenting and cleaning in the evening.

But Gerson's research did turn up some signs of change as well. For one thing, the imbalance was narrowing. Men clearly didn't consider child-rearing an equal burden—so many still called it "baby-sitting"!—but they were taking on more work than they had a generation ago, when anything remotely related to diapers or school was strictly women's work. In a small number of cases, couples had actually switched roles—the woman had become the primary breadwinner; the man the primary caregiver. Subsequent Census figures would show Gerson had found a real trend. Today, in eight percent of married couples, the woman is the primary breadwinner and the man is the primary caretaker of the children.

Gerson emphasized that, in the father-at-home couples she studied, the traditional model hadn't exactly flipped: oftentimes women remained stuck with laundry and cleaning chores, while men were off cooing at their toddlers. But the rise of the man-as-caregiver was nonetheless a clear and important break with the past. And the common elements in these couples, Gerson found, were the most predictable ones. Most of the at-home fathers were men whose careers had stagnated—or who had not been particularly interested in work at all. And many of them were married to women with successful careers.

They were, in fact, a lot like Alice Hector and Robert Young. In the first years of their marriage, in New Mexico, both were successful professionals. Alice was a small-time private lawyer pushing 40—a confident woman with two older children from a previous marriage. Robert was a private contractor in his early thirties—a bit of a dreamer who kept late hours and juggled an art-publishing project on the side. When they had their first child, a daughter, they hired a full-time nanny until the girl was ready for preschool.

But, once they moved to Miami and Alice began her career as a corporate litigator, the couple's paths diverged. Alice's starting salary at the firm of Greer, Homer & Bonner was $120,000; four years later, it was up to $275,000. In 1993, when her uncle's old firm, Steel, Hector & Davis, lured her away with a partnership offer, the initial contract was for $300,000 a year. It was a meteoric rise, one Alice earned by putting in long hours. When Alice was working on a trial, she would work twelve hours a day, seven days a week. While trial work hardly constituted the majority of her time, in the early years she was putting in at least 2,000 billable hours a year—much of it out of town. As Joseph Klock, the managing partner at Steel, Hector, would later testify, litigation's demanding schedule made it "very difficult" for lawyers to accommodate family needs. "As a matter of fact," Klock explained, "one of our litigating partners who is on part-time is now withdrawing from the firm because, even on a part-time basis as a litigator, she finds it very difficult to take care of a family."

Alice had worried about this before. When contem-

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plating the move from New Mexico, she'd jotted down a list of concerns on a piece of "Alice G. Hector" stationery: "Will I be able to work the kind of hours I need to be successful as a corporate litigator[?]" "Can I reconcile not seeing my family as much[?]" In Miami, she coped by rigorously organizing her life. She cordoned off mornings and early evenings to be with her children, picked up the housekeeper's slack, then spent every spare minute—waking up as early as five in the morning—on cases. At the custody hearing, one witness testified that Alice even dragged a pile of law books to one of her daughter's prekindergarten performances. Of course, merely by being there, Alice figured she had done more than most other working mothers—and certainly more than most other working fathers. As she later told one reporter: "I sat there and read it until the thing started and put it down and watched the play until the end. It seemed a fairly efficient way to combine working and being a mom."

Robert's career, meanwhile, fizzled. In New Mexico, a housing-market crash had dried up Robert's contracting business and saddled him with debt from a real estate project. But Robert had trouble finding work in Miami, too. He says he had no contacts in the building community and, thanks to the lingering debt, couldn't get bonded anyway. He still had his architect's degree, but it would take two years of computer training to make him marketable in that field again.

What Robert chose to do instead remains a core dispute between the couple. According to Alice, Robert spent a great deal of time alone in his makeshift office, thinking up lawsuits for her to file or tinkering with odd jobs around the house—all the while dispatching the housekeeper to fetch the kids, clean, and cook. "He doesn't do beds, he doesn't do dishes," Alice told a British publication. "He doesn't do any of the things that women do." (In her lone media appearance, after the trial, the housekeeper confirmed that she frequently chauffeured the children and made meals. However, she made that statement while Alice was paying her salary, and she did not testify under oath. She would not comment for this article.) Despite the fact that the family had a "negative cash flow," Alice says, Robert ignored her pleas that he get a job, any job.

Robert counters that his "odd jobs" frequently consisted of remodeling and maintenance work that would have cost plenty if they'd hired someone else to do it—particularly since, he says, his annual earning potential outside the house was no more than $40,000, what Alice made one year in her Christmas bonus. More important, he says, he and Alice had an understanding, going back to when they first decided to have children, that he would be the primary caretaker of the kids, since she was older, had already raised two kids (the younger of whom left for college shortly after the move to Miami), and wanted to focus on her career. As proof that he followed through, he points to several facts, many of them subsequently corroborated by others: he was the one who routinely had dinner with the children at night; he was the one who did more volunteering at school; and so on. "What dollar amount do you put on that?" he would say later. "You can hire a housekeeper, but you can't hire a replacement parent."

Whatever the reality, it's clear that Alice's full-time, paying job—and Robert's lack of one—was a source of tension. Alice resented the fact that she was working so hard, while Robert did, in her opinion, nothing. "We were two professionals," she has said. "I never ever agreed that he should stay home and take care of the children." Robert, for his part, frequently felt underappreciated and out of place. At a Steel, Hector outing in the Florida Keys, he remembers, Joseph Klock approached him and said, "It's nice to meet you, Mr. Alice." Klock says it was a harmless joke; Robert interpreted the remark as the kind of condescension that no self-respecting woman would ever tolerate. "I was only perceived as Alice's husband," he says. And, while neighborhood mothers seemed pleased enough to have him around, he didn't quite fit in there, either: "They'd talk about playing tennis, and I couldn't be part of that, either. I was between two worlds."

By 1992, Alice and Robert had drifted apart. That's when Robert went back to New Mexico for a speculative enterprise: a failed expedition to reclaim lost treasures in the mountains. Alice would later claim that the time he spent away from home during that trip and some shorter ones more than equaled the time she spent away from home for her own work over the course of their marriage. (Robert disputes that.) In addition, while in New Mexico, Robert had an affair. When Alice found out upon his return, it prompted her to file for divorce.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, common law favored fathers over mothers in custody cases, the theory being that children were primarily farmhands and thus belonged, like all property, with their fathers. But, with the rise of an industrial economy, notions of domestic labor changed. The home came to be seen as the woman's domain; the workplace the man's. Psychologists then began promoting the "tender years doctrine," which held that young children needed constant maternal nurturing. Gradually, states changed their custody laws to favor mothers. And that legal paradigm prevailed, more or less, for 100 years.

It was the forerunners of today's liberals—the Progressives—who were in many ways responsible for this state of affairs. They believed that, by ensconcing women and children in the home, they were protecting them from the ravages of industrial society. But, after World War II, once women began to seek equality in the workforce, this thinking became a liability. As long as the law presumed women should be the primary caregivers for children, society would think so, too; and, as long as society thought women belonged at home, taking care of the kids, it would never treat them as equals in the workplace. Accordingly, in the past few decades,

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many feminists have found themselves in the ironic position of arguing *against* pro-woman custody laws. Around the 1960s, they started urging states to pass gender-neutral statutes—and urging judges to favor shared custody agreements, thus reaffirming the idea that men and women are both responsible for parenting.

Current Florida law reflects this thinking. It gives judges a list of criteria by which to determine custody, all of which focus on the emotional and physical well-being of the child with no special regard for a parent's gender or financial circumstance. But, of course, that hardly settles the question—for there is no consensus on what kind of parent is actually better for a child's development. Do children suffer when left in the care of nonparents? Are parents who spend more time with their children better than parents who provide for them? Are parents who are warmer better than parents who are more stable? In the Hector-Young custody dispute, all of these questions would figure prominently. Indeed, the hearing, which unfolded over two days on the fifth floor of a Miami courthouse, became a kind of debate about what makes a good parent.

Robert, represented by a solo practitioner named Michael Vandetty, invoked the same essential argument that at-home mothers had used for years: children belong with the parent who spends more time with them and is more nurturing. He called five witnesses to swear that he was an exemplary parent—while Alice was markedly less involved. (Three others testified that both were equally good parents.) One of the children's preschool teachers said that Robert did everything from participating in cooking and art activities to volunteering as a repairman for the classroom; Alice, she said, occasionally dropped the kids off at school. One witness, who'd known the family for years and was involved with the scout troop, said that, after Robert helped start the chapter, he often stayed for meetings—something few of the mothers did. "Not only his own children but the Brownies adore him. They run and jump up on him and hug him," she said. "He has a very loving, nurturing, paternal relationship with his children.... I think he's a great mom."

Alice—whose counsel was one of the state's most respected litigators, a Steel, Hector partner named Elizabeth du Fresne—did not provide a parade of witnesses. In fact, during her own testimony, Alice conceded that, at least in recent years, Robert had spent more time in the same physical place as the children; she also acknowledged that he was involved with after-school activities, which she referred to as "this soccer thing" and that "Brownie stuff." But, she said, totaling up the mornings, the early evenings, and the weekends, she spent as much quality time with her children, maybe more—a point that few other witnesses were in a position to confirm or deny. Alice also said that the daughters enjoyed a special bond with her because she was a woman: "I think young children have a relationship with their mother that's different than their father."

But the most salient element of Alice's argument was not about which parent was more involved with the children's lives; it was about what each parent provided for them. Alice claimed that, by making the money and managing elements of the children's lives, she was the more responsible and stable influence. Here, Alice had an important ally: the guardian ad litem, Ira Dubitsky, who had conducted interviews with both parents, the children, the housekeeper, and several acquaintances. Although Dubitsky went out of his way to say that both Alice and Robert were excellent parents, and although he acknowledged that Robert had a warmer personality, he made Alice's argument for her. Noting that Robert had spent two long stints away from home—for several weeks after his brother died, and for the trip to New Mexico—he said Alice had been the more permanent presence in the children's lives. Then, citing Robert's lack of financial resources and his comparatively emotional temperament, he urged the court to give Alice primary residential custody.

The guardian's testimony was bound to weigh heavily with the judge. But, in retrospect, the judge, W. Thomas Spencer, may have been an easy sell. At one point during Robert's testimony, Spencer leaned over and interrupted: "Maybe I'm missing something. Why don't you get a job?" The judge, it seems, had made up *his* mind about what makes a good parent and issued his ruling immediately after closing arguments: primary residential custody would go to Alice. Robert would get frequent visitation, plus a modest sum for attorney's fees and some job training. And he was to move out right away.

The law office of Barbara Green is on the fourth floor of a drab professional building, down the block from a Denny's—and a world away from Steel, Hector's perch atop Miami's tallest skyscraper. But Green's comparatively downscale operation may reflect, in part, choices she's made about her life. And those choices help explain why she was eager to take on Robert Young's case when he walked in, hoping to file an appeal.

Five years earlier, Green had left a large law firm because, she says, work was taking too much time away from her family. Today, her nine-year-old son comes by the office every Tuesday after school; the rest of the week, he goes home, where his father bases his small business as a computer consultant. In the Hector-Young case, Green saw a man being penalized for making choices similar to hers. So she contacted a colleague named Ellen Lyons, a specialist in family law, and together the two started hammering out a brief that would catapult the case onto the front pages.

After reminding the court that "a half-dozen" witnesses had testified to Robert's greater parental involvement, Green and Lyons challenged Ira Dubitsky's report. (Because the case remains active, Dubitsky says he cannot comment to the media.) Of course, to win an appeal, Green and Lyons would have to show that Judge Spencer had misinterpreted the law. So they also

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argued that Spencer—and Dubitsky—had inappropriately relied on Alice's stable finances as a basis for determining custody.

The heart of their argument, though, was an explicit answer to Judge Spencer's question: "Robert was not just a good father. He was a good mother.... The trial court was, indeed, missing something.... Robert *had* a job; he was the family's primary caregiver." Green and Lyons hoped it would get the attention of the appeals judges; it certainly got the attention of Lance Harke, another Steel, Hector partner who had taken over Alice's case. Harke, too, identified with his client's plight, for he and his wife—also a full-time attorney—had three young children and left them with paid help just as Alice did. Harke read Robert's appeal as a broad attack on working mothers and responded in kind: "In truth, the only 'gender stereotype' here is the elemental one permeating Mr. Young's initial brief: *that Ms. Hector is unfit as a mother because she is successful as a lawyer.* That a woman could be both is inconceivable to Mr. Young." At trial, Alice had praised Robert's fathering, calling him "probably one of the best fathers in the world." The appellate brief was a bit less generous: "After being told his wife wanted a divorce, this out-of-work, manipulative debtor hired a lawyer, set out to become 'Mr. Mom' in order to obtain child support and alimony, and pretended to engage in a lengthy negotiation of the terms of the divorce so that he could establish a longer record of having spent some time with his children."

Appellate courts generally don't revisit the facts of a case, since they work from written records, while trial judges can hear witnesses firsthand. But the three male judges reviewing the Hector-Young case felt no such reticence. In a decision conspicuous for its lack of gender-specific identifiers—throughout, the judges referred to Alice and Robert as "the attorney" and "the architect"—the court on June 24 threw out Spencer's ruling, making its own statement about what makes a good parent. "The fact that one parent is the primary caretaker should always outweigh the fact that the other parent is more financially stable," the judges wrote. They gave Robert custody on the spot.

When a reporter from the Miami *Daily Business Review* got wind of the story, he presented it in terms that publication's careerist readership could relate to: "Last week, Alice Hector learned that success sometimes comes at a harsh price. A state appeals court stripped her of custody of her two young daughters and awarded them to her former husband. The main reason: Hector ... works too much." Almost immediately, support for Alice began pouring forth from South Florida's professional community. In a follow-up article in the *Review*, one lawyer said: "What scared me as a parent was that she was accused of reading legal materials during recitals. But that's what you do; that's how you make the time." Melvyn Frumkes, a prominent divorce attorney in the area, asked incredulously: "Heck, she was there. What is she supposed to do, stand up and cheer?" Susan Reddy, a public relations executive in nearby Plantation, said she "totally related to Alice Hector.... There's more to life than just staying home and taking care of your kids."

It wasn't long before the story had made its way onto the business pages of *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, then to NPR, and, ultimately, on "Dateline." With each retelling, the indignation on Alice's behalf grew. "On this basis, just about every working mother in America could lose her children," predicted Nancy Duff Campbell, copresident of the National Women's Law Center. "The court may have been too ready to assume that the father's contributions outweighed the mother's," Nancy Chang of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York told the Associated Press. Alice herself attacked the appeals decision on the very same grounds: "It sets the cause of working women back a generation."

To be sure, Robert had his supporters, too. Organizations representing the men's movement—which has always seen an anti-male bias in custody law—claimed Robert as their new standard-bearer. Conservatives, meanwhile, seized an opportunity to pile on a familiar nemesis: "The feminist advice Alice Hector followed turned out badly, as feminist advice so often does," David Frum wrote in an op-ed for *The Toronto Sun*. None of this much helped Robert's image in elite circles—if anything, it served to confirm the popular conception of the story: a case of male judges, male conservative social critics, and a manipulative male parent exacting society's revenge upon a working woman.

These days, an emotionally spent Robert Young does not worry as much about his media image as he does about losing the case. In an unusual move, Florida's Third District Court of Appeals last month granted Alice's petition for a rehearing before all eleven judges. Oral argument is slated for early December. Robert, who now has a full-time job as a youth activity coordinator at the YMCA—a job with flexible hours that allows him to work from home when the kids are done with school—knows he can count on the support of the three judges who originally ruled for him. But the mere fact that the full court agreed to revisit the case suggests other judges think the three-judge panel erred. It's possible the court will remand the case for a new hearing—even though the children are now nine and twelve, and another trial could mean another year, or more, of court fighting.

To be sure, this is not an easy issue, legally or morally. Both parents speak passionately and convincingly; no outsider (including myself) can say with certainty whose version of the truth is closer to reality. Still, conversations with the participants and a close reading of the trial records suggest that Robert's core contention—that he is a committed parent dedicated to spending time with his children—is true. Eight witnesses testified, under oath, that he was extensively and enthusiastically

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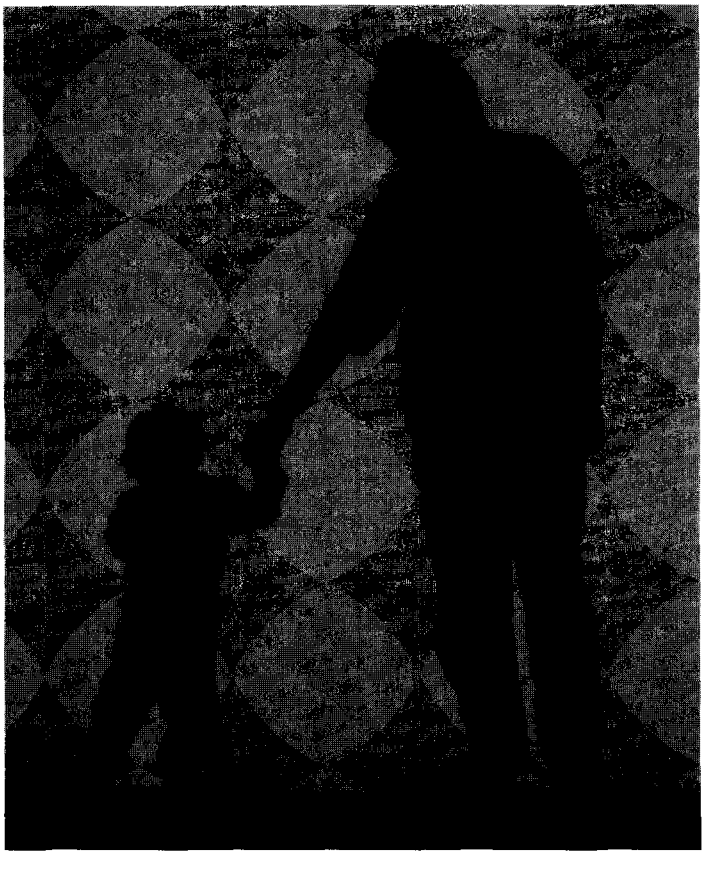
involved with his children's activities. Even the guardian, who recommended custody go to Alice, acknowledged that Robert is an excellent and unusually involved father; during the trial, Alice said nearly the same thing. Everything about Robert's life—right down to his current job—suggests his parental devotion is genuine. Robert certainly conveyed that sense when I spent two hours with him in Miami, as well as in a series of subsequent phone conversations.

Alice—who declined to comment on the record for this story—is clearly devoted to her children, too. And she's done a remarkable job of making time for them. What's more, it seems likely that, when she married Robert, she did not expect he would end up an at-home parent. But the question is not whether Alice has reason to resent Robert. Nor is the question whether Alice is a bad parent. The question is whether Robert is as good a parent as Alice, and whether he has more time for his children than she does. And while Alice left Steel, Hector in October to start her own firm—in part, no doubt, to make more time for her children—there's little reason to expect that she'll have more time with the children than Robert will. Thanks to his flexible and less demanding job, he can still be a full-time father when the children are at home. That seems to make his custody case the stronger one. (If indeed she does have more time now, then presumably that would be grounds for an arrangement approaching joint physical custody—but it's hard to see why Robert shouldn't remain the primary custodian, assuming he and his corroborating witnesses weren't grossly distorting the facts.)



In the eyes of many feminists, such a verdict would implicitly punish all working mothers by acknowledging that a parent who spends less time with his or her child is depriving that child of something. And they are correct in noting that, in the past, such logic has left working mothers in a no-win situation: employers penalize women when they do not put in the same hours as men, yet, when they do, society accuses them—and not their husbands—of parental neglect. Then, on top of all that, most of them get stuck pulling second shifts of child care and chores at home.

Unfortunately, all too frequently the response to this problem has been to deny that parental attention even matters—to say that parents can always manage by substituting quality time for quantity time, scheduling their children around work, without making any career sacrifices whatsoever. You don't have to be an attachment theory fanatic to find that argument troubling. Generally, children do better if they have more loving care from parents. This is common sense, and it is backed by a substantial—albeit controversial—body of research.

That doesn't mean that in every couple one parent has to stay at home or that in two-earner couples both parents must work part-time. After all, many families seem to do better when both parents have fulfilling careers. But society should encourage parents to do whatever they can to make time for their children, and it should not look askance at parents who choose to stay at home, regardless of gender. (It should also make it more economically feasible for parents to spend time with their children—something this country has never done well.)

When it comes to child-rearing, society expects far more of women than men. That clearly needs to change, but the way to do that is to divide the obligation equally between fathers and mothers. And that requires acknowledging that raising children is a productive activity—just as building houses, answering phones, or crafting multimillion-dollar corporate deals are. This is not the argument many of Alice's feminist defenders have made, but it's one they should know well—because through most of the twentieth century it was primarily feminists who made it.

Indeed, if Robert's critics had jumped to the same conclusions about an at-home mother—that she was obviously lazy and irresponsible because she didn't work outside the home, she wasn't successful at professional life when she tried, and she had a housekeeper for the tedium—feminists would be indignant, and rightly so. We should respect and applaud Robert Young's parental efforts, just as we respect and applaud Alice's professional accomplishments. It seems to be in the best interests of the children. It is certainly in the best interests of a more equal society. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

In the Midst of Life

At last they have found the right way to present Brad Pitt. His career so far has been an anomaly: he has had huge success without a really comfortable role. In *Legends of the Fall* he was asked to be the new Brando, which didn't really suit him. In *Seven Years in Tibet* he spent the whole film looking for a way to make his role sympathetic. In *The Devil's Own* his role was so knotted in plot twists that, despite a fair Irish accent, the Pitt persona was handicapped. But now they have given him a character that makes the most of him, and—a further anomaly—that character is the basic B. Pitt, plus a huge symbolic persona. In **Meet Joe Black** (Universal), he plays a young man who is killed in an accident early in the picture and whose body is then appropriated by Death himself—"himself" because Death is personified—when he comes to take a billionaire to the Other Side.

The billionaire has an attractive daughter, and thereby hangs this meandering tale. The screenplay, by four writers who are connected by two "ands" and one ampersand, derives from the Italian play *Death Takes a Holiday*, by Alberto Casella, which was a theater success in the 1920s and was filmed in 1934 with Fredric March in the leading role. The difference in leading men, from the polished March to the vernacular Pitt, is a historical comment in itself. Still, it was an amusing touch of daring to put today's gonad king in this fantasy, thus all the more gratifying to see that, for Pitt at least, it succeeds.

The changes from the original play—really the abandonment of the original except for its basic idea—are worth noting on only one point. Originally, Death's infatuation with his victim's daughter takes his mind off his job: people stop dying all over the globe. But if the new screenplay omits this twist, it supplies a load of others, including the billionaire's efforts to keep his huge media corporation from falling into the hands of exploiters and his success with the help he gets from Death.

The daughter, rather listlessly engaged to her father's business aide who is secretly engineering the sellout, falls in love with Joe Black, the name by which Death is known in this house. This love, which heats up, burdens the viewer with some strain on the imagination. All right, let Death take on the person of a good-looking young man. Classic enough. But to have Death and the young woman actually make love? Death with an erection? With an orgasm? "In the midst of life we are in death," says the Book of Common Prayer, and I refrain from rearranging the line to make it apt.

The best scene in the picture is the meeting between the young woman and the young man before he is killed, before his body is commandeered. It's a happenstance meeting in a coffee shop, fresh and funny, right out of a slick 1930s *Saturday Evening Post* story. The extra effect of the scene is that, like the young woman, we ourselves are meeting Pitt, the essential film-star Pitt, for the first time, and he's very engaging indeed. After Death takes over the young man's body, Pitt has to supply mystic gravity, which he does—quietly if not awesomely. It's the attractive young fellow who originally inhabited the body who keeps us involved after that body gets another tenant.

Meet Joe Black is one of those stories that, as soon as relationships become clear, make us wonder how the writers are going to tie things up at the end. I'd say that they are still wondering: what we see looks like a dummy ending that they stuck in just to hold the space until they solved the problem. Let's note only that a huge fireworks display fills the sky as the rather dubious finish is put before us, and that it takes nearly three (not always fleeting) hours to get there.

Anthony Hopkins plays the tycoon with as much conviction as the carpentered character will permit. Claire Forlani, who plays his daughter, is one of those latter-day camera performers who rely on the closeness of the audience and its appetite for minute mimetics. Before she speaks any line or answers any question, Forlani's face goes through a whole spectrum of emotions and thoughts, to show us that complications of mind and heart are flickering through her and that, above all, she is going to be 1990s-honest about them. She's an interesting contrast to Hopkins, who manages to be honest without going through facial calisthenics before every line to certify it.

Thomas Newman's music should not pass without a protest: it's the noisiest compilation of bangs and surges in several weeks. But of course this is partly the responsibility of the producer and director, Martin Brest, who bathed most of the picture in somewhat leisurely

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dancing at Lughnasa. *Brian Friel's much-praised play is only a distended one-acter, but there's much Irish flavor here—not least Meryl Streep as the eldest of five love-starved sisters. (Reviewed 11/30/98)* **Happiness.** *Frank, candid exploration of the lovelessness of contemporary love and the enforced mechanics of sex. Done with outrageous skill. (11/9/98)* **Lolita.** *She still isn't really Nabokov's 12-year-old, but it's closer to the novel than Kubrick's version. (10/5/98)* **Pleasantville.** *Two 1990s teenagers, brother and sister, get transposed into a 1950s TV serial. Some laughs, as long as we overlook plot glitches and implicit present-day smugness. (11/23/98)* **—SK**

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movieness but who, at any rate, sloughed several cocoons off Pitt.

What will become of Edward Zwick? It's a question worth being bothered about because his second film, after a reasonable version of a David Mamet play, was *Glory*, which easily stands among the best of serious American films. After that triumph came *Leaving Normal*, which was too justly titled, *Legends of the Fall*, an inflated Western epic (with both Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins, neither at his best), and *Courage Under Fire*, a good-enough job about the military. Now comes **The Siege** (20th Century Fox), which is just about distinguishable from several dozen predecessors in the same apocalyptic vein. The most recent was *The Peacemaker*.

Denzel Washington, who was in two previous Zwick films, is an FBI chief in New York, attempting to stop terrorist bombings by Islamic fanatics. (To balance racial-religious matters, his Number One assistant is a man of Arab descent, played by Tony Shalhoub, who is of Lebanese descent.) Annette Bening, as a CIA operative who has had large experience of the Middle East, is also on the job. Bruce Willis, usually the star of pictures like this one, here is content to play a secondary role, a U.S. Army general.

Thus, instead of the usual rivalry between two investigating forces—say, the FBI and the local police—Zwick and his coauthors of the screenplay give us three contestants, FBI, CIA, and Army, each claiming pride of place and rightness of approach to the problem. This increase of rivalry by 50 percent doesn't cure the inter-service bickering of its tedium.

With battalions of extras and with Manhattan locations, Zwick sends shivers up the spine by making us see how vulnerable the city—any city—is to terrorist action. But the stern reward of his directorial virtue is that it makes the comfy ending of the story all the more spurious. The dangers are too real for the patness of the city's rescue. Matters aren't helped by the cardboard character that Washington is given or by the muddle of the Bening character. In the effort to rescue her from the Washington cardboard, the script makes her a ragout of contradictions.

But the real worry is Zwick himself, the man who made *Glory*. All of us know about the huge difficulties for personal, independent work in Hollywood today; still, the only pictures we can look at are the ones we are given. Whatever the causes, Zwick's career at the moment seems as if his extraordinary second film had merely earned him the chance to make ordinary ones. •

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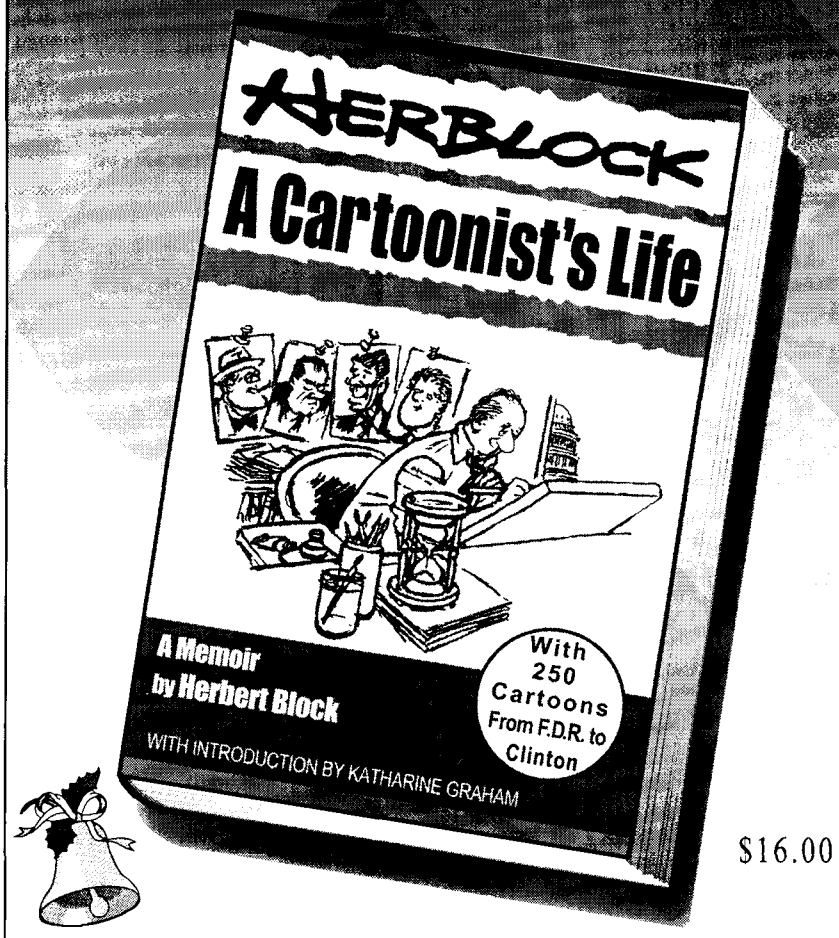

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Parents, peers, and the rearing of children.

The Influence of Anxiety

By Ann Hulbert

I.

Beware of grandmothers, warned the pediatricians and the psychologists who set up shop as child-rearing experts a century ago. Doctors joked nervously among themselves about the gray-haired authorities whom they aimed to edge out of the business of advising parents. "I would suggest as a heading for a chapter 'The elimination of the grandmother,'" opined one pediatric adviser at a meeting in 1917. "The grandmother is the great trial of my life. She probably has had eight children and I have not had any."

The experts were not kidding about counting her experience against her. The age of science had dawned, and grandmotherly wisdom was based on out-of-date anecdotes rather than on objective, extensive data. Hers was the voice of sentimentalism and superstition, full of homespun lore that was barely serviceable back in the nineteenth century. To prepare children to thrive in the intimidating twentieth, parents needed primers packed with advice straight from the new psychology labs. If grandmother balks or butts in, the experts counseled modern mothers, just throw the book at her.

Now a grandmother has thrown all the books back in the experts' faces. Judith Rich Harris is full of *impertinence grise* as she, a housebound non-academic, challenges roughly a hundred years' worth of psychological research on children's development that has purported (she says) to show what enormous power parents have to shape their offspring's futures. Turning the tables on the experts, she struts her grandmotherly status and argues that it is they who have succumbed to sentimentalism and superstition. The experts, Harris maintains, have never actually proved their case. Instead they have called upon science to prop up a hearth-warming myth that has turned out to be anxiety-inducing for all concerned.

Harris prides herself on clear-headed distance from the academic establishment. She was "kicked out of Harvard's Department of Psychology with only a master's degree." After having one child, she adopted another. Later, "stuck at home for many years due to chronic health problems," she read on her own all those books that she hadn't gotten to as a graduate student or, evidently, as a nervous parent. Harris turned to writing developmental psychology textbooks, freelance work that suited a woman who carried water for no one in the field and who was confined to bed—until, after years of growing uneasiness, "it suddenly occurred to me that many of the things I had been telling those credulous college students were wrong." Being shut in, Harris believes, allowed her to keep an unusually open mind. She was the informed outsider who could recognize scientific data as the wishful dogma that it has often been.

The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do
by Judith Rich Harris
(Free Press, 462 pp., $26)

Three Seductive Ideas
by Jerome Kagan
(Harvard University Press, 232 pp., $27.50)

Yet Harris is not content to be merely a village skeptic, exposing the shoddy science inspired by what she calls "the nurture assumption—the notion that parents are the most important part of the child's environment and can determine, to a large extent, how the child turns out." She is a grandmother who aspires to be a scientific guru herself. Harris has come up with an alternative theory, with nothing less than "a new way of explaining why children turn out the way they do." She contends that it is the peer group, not individual parents, that determines how the genetic predispositions with which we are born develop into the socialized personality we are blessed, or burdened, with by the time we reach adulthood, "somewhere between the ages of 17 and 35." Harris presents this theory as a homespun patchwork of various schools of academic research that have rarely intersected—personality development, social psychology, cultural anthropology, and child development. Notions from the newer field of evolutionary psychology help her stitch it together, and further backing is provided by the comparably recent enterprise of behavioral genetics.

This grandmother's fate has been swift elevation rather than elimination. A glowing profile of Harris in *The New Yorker* and an award from the American Psychological Association preceded the appearance of her book. *The Nurture Assumption* immediately stirred up controversy. In his foreword, Steven Pinker pronounces it "a turning point in the history of psychology." Others in the field have lined up to say that "she's all wrong" and "I am embarrassed for psychology." Like many successful child-rearing gurus before her, Harris appears to be telling non-experts what we most, and least, want to hear. Her book has been celebrated as a long-awaited liberation for guilt-ridden super-parents. It has also been denounced as an ill-timed absolution for "self-absorbed parents with a track record of putting their own desires ahead of their children's needs." In the working-parent era, a book like *The Nurture Assumption* is certain to touch a nerve. Perhaps that is why it has not been read very carefully.

II.

In any period of the twentieth century, a book such as *The Nurture Assumption* would have touched a nerve. For Harris has zeroed in on the dilemma that has kept popular child-rearing experts in business, and has tied parents in knots, for a hundred years. In the mysterious process of shaping personalities in and for a fast-changing modern society of group allegiances, how much power can parents at home really have? This is hardly the heretical question that Harris and her critics and her champions seem to think. It has a long historical pedigree. To understand just what seeds of sedition Harris might be sowing, it helps to understand the tradition of confusion behind her.

A century before Harris arrived on the scene, parents were on the defensive,

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worried that the family's socializing clout was waning in urban, industrial, mobile America. Where parents had once reared their children to follow in their footsteps, the daunting challenge had become to prepare children "to grapple successfully with the complex conditions and varied responsibilities which will be their lot," in the words of Dr. Luther Emmett Holt, the pioneering expert of the 1890s. No wonder grandmothers were told to sit quietly in their rockers. What could they possibly know about such things? But parents themselves were less than secure about their own credentials for the job. In an era that extolled the unknown wonders of the future, they were acutely aware of being the voice of the past or, at best, the present.

The experts tooling up in the numerous psychology labs across American university campuses did not have to plant doubt in parental minds. After all, adults inhabited the jangly modern world, and they daily inhaled, along with new industrial fumes, two mutually reinforcing fears: there was so much more that children needed to be prepared for (and protected against), and parents were so much less prepared to help them. The experts quickly acquired prominence because they told parents what they wanted to hear. Precisely because the world was full of so many competing pressures and lures, the various gurus agreed, parents had become more crucial than ever in guiding their children's growth. The right by-the-hearth intimacy guaranteed that a child would get ahead in a heartless world. The best by-the-book intimacy also guaranteed that a mother need not get left behind the scientific times, nor go along with the soul-deadening times. Busy at home, expertly equipping her child for the world, she was up-to-date. The nurture assumption, in short, was the ungainly brainchild of nurture panic.

After World War I, parents and experts could not help focusing more intently on what it was in the world that seemed most threatening, and most alluring: a "new generation" of gangly youths who took so long to grow up. In an emerging meritocratic system, where the middle-class route increasingly led through high school and on to college, adolescent peer groups had become a cultural force to contend with. Americans were fixated on youth. They were fascinated and appalled by the cohort that seemed to challenge so many pieties of the past. Sociologists and psychologists hurriedly got to work on socialization theories that could take account of this new element in family and social life—without letting it take over. The nurture assumption, unsettled by the peer principle, went through a decidedly awkward growth spurt.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the convoluted parental wisdom that emerged is: beat 'em by joining 'em. The peer-ification of the family proceeded apace, as Paula Fass has shown in *The Damned and the Beautiful*, a history of "American Youth in the 1920s." The "affectionate" modern family of expert lore, which had already elevated the wife to loving equal of her husband and expert guide of her children, regrouped on the level of supremely compatible, adaptable companions. Parents were becoming pals.

Depending on whom you listened to, these peer-parents were meant to cooperate with, or to complement, or to compete with, or to co-opt the crowd of youths knocking at the door, ready to turn mama's boy into the suitably conforming—yet also suitably competitive—personality for the next generation. One mother captured the ambivalent ethos with comic poignancy in *Middletown*, Robert and Helen Lynd's "Study in Contemporary American Culture," in 1929. "I put on roller skates with the boys and pass a football with them," she earnestly explained to the sociologists. "My mother back East thinks it's scandalous, but I tell her I don't think any-

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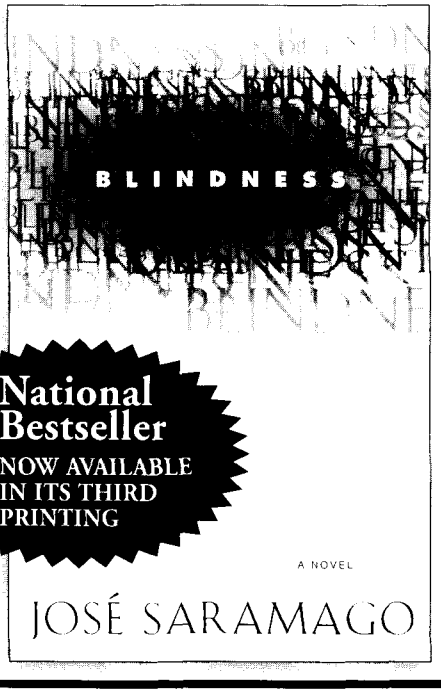

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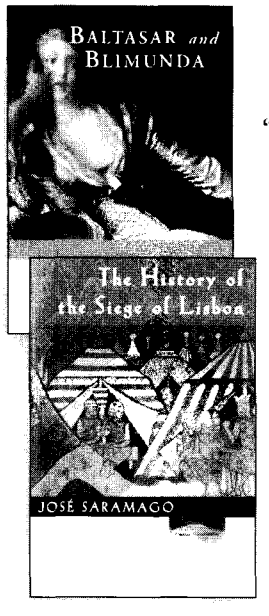

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thing very bad can happen to boys when they're there with their mother and father."

Seventy years later, Harris still thinks that such a parental approach, while not scandalous, is pretty preposterous and certainly pointless as a personality-shaping ploy. (She would also note that it is lacking in the spirit of spontaneity that might make roller skating with mother much fun at all.) By contrast, many of the rest of us—the by-the-book super-moms and those "self-absorbed" specimens of parenthood, too—have raised the ideal of the peer-parent to new heights. If we are home, squatting down to discuss the bad feelings that just erupted in a sibling brawl, we are self-consciously taking our children seriously as equals, and "modeling mediation skills" without which their lives at the playground might be a social disaster—and their future careers in jeopardy.

Or if we are out playing in our silly T-shirts, or working at our gratifying jobs, we see it as closing the gap, too. Don't parents, just like children, need creative outlets? Plus we are being role models for life in an on-the-go world. Whichever spot we find ourselves in, though, we are usually feeling nagged by anxiety and lacking in authority. We may even feel somewhat ridiculous, but we tell ourselves that our narcissistic, companionate nurturing is surely not pointless in the long run—even as we panic that something very bad might indeed happen to boys and girls. We panic, in fact, more than ever before.

Harris thinks that it is high time to do what parents and experts have spent a century studiously talking about doing for children and failing to do for themselves: draw lines, set limits, and adjust expectations about the relations between adults and children through life. She does not settle the question of who rules—peers or parents—nearly as starkly, or as scientifically, as she aims to. But why should she, and how could she? Harris's own zeal to replace one exaggerated determinism with another is strangely at odds with what seems, on a close reading of her book, her true mission. For the underlying message of *The Nurture Assumption* is not that parents should give up, it is that parents should grow up—which means acknowledging that much of our children's fates eludes anyone's control but their own.

Beyond the genes they pass on, Harris maintains, parents do not have as much power over their children's futures as they hope and fear. This is not a particularly novel idea. And what Harris trumpets as her truly original position is also quite familiar: the unsettling notion that peers have inordinate sway has been around for a long time. Still, Harris does have a jarring idea for our times, which you would never guess from her press, or from her penchant for pronouncements such as "parents count zilch." Not altogether wittingly, but quite wisely, she ends up making a case that what influence parents do have with their children is perhaps more than they (or the experts) actually realize, and that they have it by virtue of *not* being their children's peers. They have it, rather, by virtue of being adults, with their own peers. It would be a pity, though hardly unprecedented in the dizzying advice industry of the so-called "century of the child," if this piece of mature realism were overwhelmed by Harris's own extremism, and by good old American alarmism.

III.

Harris draws firm lines and sets up high expectations for herself. First, she wants to show that there has never been anything like definitive scientific evidence for the nurture assumption, and by doing so, to disprove it. Second, she proposes to prove that her peer principle can take over as the omnipotent—and scientific—explanation of why children turn out the way they do. Such an audacious agenda inspires rigor. It also sets her up for trouble. After all, as she herself admits, "child rearing is not physics." Harris very soon exposes the limits of her enterprise, and this turns out to be the most instructive lesson of all. Science cannot begin to guide us definitively in raising children, but perhaps it can goad us into seeing how much might be—and just as important, how much might not be—up to us and our own best guesswork.

Harris's case against the nurture assumption reveals what has been obvious from its inception: the myth's strength has never been that it rests on scientific certainty, but that it has been so resilient in the face of scientific (and social) uncertainty. Thus it is hopeless to try to demolish the nurture assumption by exposing the dubious data behind it. The best you can do is deploy the motley evidence to define parental influence more realistically—and this ends up being Harris's accomplishment. Nor can Harris prove that peer power is as decisive as she claims. But she doesn't need to: by failing to demonstrate peer determinism at work, she provokes a clarity about peer clout that has been lacking for decades.

Much of the case that Harris builds for the scientific shakiness of the nurture assumption has been laid out by academic specialists themselves. Already in the 1920s, when child development first emerged as a field in psychology, worries about making and keeping it "scientifically respectable" were much on researchers' minds. Social philanthropists were pounding on laboratory doors, eager for data to support the crusade of "parent education" that was sweeping America. Psychologists were apprehensive about rushing their research on children's growth and parental influence. They condescended to the brash colleague who had no such qualms: John B. Watson, the founder of behaviorism, who boldly extrapolated from a few colorful lab experiments (among them, conditioning a stolid eleven-month-old named Albert to be terrified of a white rat) to highly popular lessons for parents about their formidable power to mold fearless personalities. (And even his avid lay audience was dubious about just how deep his science went. "I swallow Watson whole because I want to believe I can do something about fears," one mother confessed to her parents' group, "not because I am convinced that he is sound.")

In 1927, the mood in the headquarters of child development research was anything but hubristic about the promise of science to equip parents and social planners with the secrets of successful child-rearing. The report of a meeting of the Child Development Committee of the influential National Research Council sounded a scientific alarm that has been echoed since. "The fruits of present research, it is to be feared, are not sufficient to maintain in scientific health the rapidly growing movement," the secretary warned. The "very success of the childward movement" held a "grave danger," which was that the impatience of parents would overwhelm the patience of scientists,

> that the demand from various quarters—legislative, humanitarian, educational, journalistic—will so far exceed the supply provided by the slow processes of research that the movement will escape the bounds of fact and wander off into the alluring jungle of easy generalization and over-confident dogmatism. Science is asked to point the way where as yet there is no way—but the movement proceeds nonetheless.

The committee's recommendation? "Illimitable research": not to confirm the crusaders' easy dogmas about more perfect parental and social control, but to put complicated data in their way. The secretary emphasized just how difficult the necessary studies were going to be to design. The limitations of the "artificial

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experimental set-up" (Watson's bailiwick) must be overcome through work in "the normal child environment." It was a daunting task. So much time was required for home investigations, and so many mundane variables had to be accounted for—"the slamming of a door, the sudden thunder shower, one angry temper display of a parent."

The research has indeed gone on and on, doggedly, awkwardly, ingeniously, inadequately attempting to overcome the obstacles posed by specimens who are, alas, neither as quiet nor as manipulable as mice. In the seventy years since the Child Development Committee's meeting, academic researchers have become only more aware of how often the mysteries of child-rearing and development elude the mastery of science. How do you create a control group of squirmy children and parents? Why should you believe the observations and the memories of family members? Who on earth has a consistent "parenting style," the same for all children or even for one child all the time? Can you trust personality studies, given the notorious problem of context—the inconvenient fact that tests of the same person turn out very different depending on the setting, among other things? And what can you really say about results when, as Harris says, "correlations come with no built-in arrows to distinguish causes from effects"?

You cannot say much—or you can say anything, at least when the data concern hot child-rearing topics such as bonding and discipline and personality development, and are inevitably distorted on their way to the public. This revelation has led plenty of scientists themselves (hardly card-carrying social constructionists) to caution that "child development is a product of social needs that had little to do with science qua science." That was the verdict of Robert Sears, a prominent figure in the field who spent much of the 1940s and 1950s trying to test psychoanalytic hypotheses about the effects of parents' child-rearing practices (with very disappointing results). William Kessen, a revered dean in child development who trained an influential generation of psychologists at Yale, described child psychology as "a peculiar cultural invention that moves with the tidal sweeps of the larger culture in ways we understand at best dimly and often ignore." Much of what experts have preached to parents, he emphasized, has portrayed research as being far more solid than it is. "In the 1950s and 1960s," Kessen confessed, "we oversold ourselves or were oversold ... in all the child fields, but certainly in areas of cognitive and social development, and exquisitely in the field called learning."

Jerome Kagan, an eminent psychologist at Harvard, has been perhaps the most outspoken skeptic about the scientific underpinnings of the pieties of parenting. He has pointed out that our fondest beliefs about child-rearing do not rest on proofs, but on fears and hopes—which also means, as he cautions in his new book, that they are not really susceptible to disproof either. In *Three Seductive Ideas*, he holds up a central tenet of the nurture assumption for critical scrutiny: "the allure of infant determinism," or the conviction that experiences in infancy and toddlerhood make the man or woman.

The idea that the die is cast by age three or so, during the years of intensive parental care (in our society at any rate), has been peddled as scientific gospel by psychoanalysts, developmentalists, and behaviorists alike since the 1920s. It is as vigorous as ever in the 1990s, thanks not least to Hillary Clinton's enthusiasm for it. In an "immature" field such as psychology that rests on "weak evidence," Kagan suggests, such an idea can thrive even though it is not readily demonstrable, because it is not readily deniable either. Meanwhile, it conforms cozily to the Western faith in personal responsibility and in an unbroken continuity between past and present. (Kagan also notes another source of its popularity: telling mothers to kiss or not to kiss their babies is cheaper than overhauling social policies.)

The reason that the infant-determinist credo cannot be rocked right out of its cradle is more than methodological. It is definitional. Think of the obvious difficulties in getting "robust" measurements of any trait over the long haul from infancy to adulthood. Then consider how much room there is for disagreement about what traits ought to be measured in the first place. Kagan asks about "the derivatives of early experience that should be given the highest priority. Are they specific cognitive abilities, psychiatric symptoms, fame, wealth, a good marriage, parenting success, a satisfying sex life, capacity for love, meaningful work, loyal friends, or simply a subjective feeling of well-being?" This woolliness makes experimentation a nightmare, and promises a field day for cheap nostrums and popular prescriptions. "The lack of accord among clinicians, humanists, or scientists as to which quality—or qualities—has the tightest link to specific early experiences," Kagan observes, "makes either refuting the determinist's claim or proving it correct impossible."

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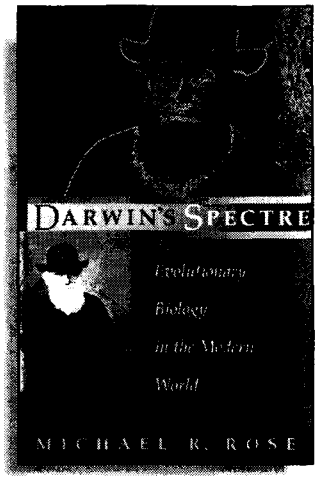

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IV.

So the nurture assumption has thrived despite the indeterminacy of data. If anything, proclamations of parent power have grown stronger as the scientific evidence for them has become murkier. And for many decades now, you haven't had to wear a lab coat to be aware of the inconsistencies and the confusions. Any parent who follows the popularized accounts of the latest research is uneasily aware that findings have a way of shifting frequently, even on the most basic physical questions. Should a baby be put to sleep on her stomach, her side, or her back to ward off the danger of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome? Baby-boomer parents have heard it all. On psychological matters, who is surprised when a headline in the *Science Times* proclaims, "Re-evaluating Significance of Baby's Bond with Mother"? As Dr. Spock acknowledged in his second edition, science has been a less than confidence-inspiring addition to parenting.

Harris's contribution is to impose lucid shape on evidence the very inconclusiveness of which is by now enough to make conscientious parents even more persuaded that pretty much everything they do, or do not do, is likely to make some difference (or not enough difference) in the way their children turn out—but don't ask them what difference exactly. (After all, who knows what tidbit of unnerving, if also indeterminate, evidence is likely to turn up next?) Harris acknowledges her debt to academics with "long and distinguished careers" in the child development field who have lately bridged the newer "nature" camp of behavioral geneticists and the traditional "nurture" camp of socialization researchers, taking skeptical stock of the cumulative findings. They have concluded that very little of the socialization researchers' work thus far holds up well, mainly because it has failed to appreciate the role of heredity. They have also suggested that behavioral geneticists still have a long way to go to take subtle enough account of what happens in the intricate environment of the family.

Mixing logic-chopping rigor and wisecracking humor, Harris turns these academic overviews and her own sleuthing into a brisk tour of controversial data collection and interpretation—a "Stats and Spats" course aimed at the attentive nonscientist. She deftly leads her readers through the inadequacies of socialization research, which has relied on studies of one child and failed to recognize that parents provide not just a home environment for their children, but genes as well. Thus it is impossible to be sure whether the correlations that do show up between parents and children are the result of conscious parental shaping, as opposed to mere evidence of heredity at work. Moreover, it is impossible to be sure what is cause and what is effect. Does the temperamentally jolly baby shape the engaged parenting style, or vice versa? Certainly two very different children can be shown to elicit very different kinds of behavior from the same parent.

Harris is much more impressed by the findings of behavioral geneticists. Relying on adoption and twin studies, they have set out to tackle the slippery problem of separating hereditary and environmental effects on personality traits. Their results have been usefully disconcerting. Adopted children do not resemble their adoptive parents or adoptive siblings, even when they have shared a home since birth. Identical twins reared apart turn out to have a great deal in common. Conversely, identical twins reared together—sharing the same genes and the same home environment—turn out to be quite different. In fact, "they are no more alike than the ones reared in different homes!"

By the late 1970s, behavioral geneticists had demonstrated, not all that surprisingly (or subtly), that heredity and environment each contributed about half to explaining the variations among people. But there was also an unexpected result: siblings who shared genes and a home did not seem to be alike enough. Their "shared environment" appeared, if anything, to be making them less, rather than more, similar. Both the "nature" camp and the "nurture" camp had thus converged on a version of the same conundrum: insofar as a child's home life played a part in shaping his or her future personality, it did not seem to be in any predictable way that could be shown, through scientific studies, to reflect a parent's particular style of rearing.

Here Harris's patience grows thin. In the absence of firm data, she sees only dogma at work; and she is eager to impose dogma of her own. She is ready to denounce as a totally empty promise the assumption that parents have *any* impact. Her survey of both sides' undaunted efforts to delve more deeply into the recesses of the home certainly demonstrates what an invitation to scientific frustration the nurture assumption is: their results have been mixed at best. Still, what would truly seem surprising, and even suspect, would be if researchers had been able to distill out some pure extract of parental power, utterly untainted by genetic factors or by "child-driven" effects. How much would it really tell us anyway if they could, given that no parent operates in a vacuum? As a contributor to an anthology called *The New Generation: The Intimate Problems of Modern Parents and Children*, which appeared in 1930, could have reminded Harris, "clarity does not begin at home."

Harris's criticisms in fact point up how much modesty prevails in the laboratory. Attachment theorists, for instance, now take pains to acknowledge that an infant's temperament, not just a parent's affect, plays a large part in forging the bond between them. Nor do they argue any longer that that bond is a "working model" for all the other relationships in a baby's life. Finally, they acknowledge

Signs and Portents

If the directions say, "Dip the baby," then
dip the baby, submerge even the heel.
"Victory is assured"? Whose?
Please ask whose. The gods are clever
and we are vain and misread
even the obvious. Even the simple world
which warns us and warns us.
Best kill no one, even if they bear
no paternal resemblance, even if they are rude
and obstructive. Disregard
the bicameral mind and all its fond
ambiguities. And should the heart,
which hasn't the luxury
of ambiguity, come from the front
with its keen directive, please take heed
this once. "Be careful," says the hurried scrawl,
"you can't give her too much."

Steve Kronen

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how evanescent future traces of infant attachment can be. Kagan cites examples of their more hedged claims. "Early experience can not be more important than later experience," a prominent researcher has admitted, "and life in a changing environment should alter the quality of a child's adaptation." It would be hard to get more attenuated than this: "What is incorporated from the caregiving experiences are not specific behavioral features, but the quality and patterning of relationships, mediated by affect." Harris is quite right to emphasize that this sort of scientific mumbo jumbo is a far cry from parental determinism; but it certainly is not proof of parental powerlessness either.

Harris is also impatient with the attempts of behavioral geneticists to probe the ways in which the family can operate as a "non-shared environment" that helps to differentiate the hereditarily similar. They have pursued the question of how "feedback loops" get started in which small genetic differences between children trigger much larger environmental differences for them. Add siblings to the soup, and figuring out the recipe behind the resulting flavors becomes a truly daunting challenge. Birth-order research, which Harris is not the first to survey skeptically, is murky. The existence of a "first-born personality" hardly seems as clear as proponents (most recently Frank Sulloway) claim, but that is partly—as her appendix proves—because measurements are tricky to compile and to compare. It is also because personality is so tricky to define. Kagan wagers that "no present concept in personality will survive the next half century."

Other hypotheses about sibling effects are "difficult to test," Harris herself admits in the article that led to her book. Perhaps that jolly baby enjoys a more responsive mother than her fussy older sister did thanks not just to her own smiley ways. Perhaps she owes it also to her cranky predecessor, who primed their mother to greet a Gerber specimen with special eagerness. It sounds plausible, but researchers who tried to tackle this one concluded that the cause-or-effect problem "is a notoriously intractable issue." Harris proceeds as though such methodological problems were in themselves decisive proof of conceptual problems. In effect she concludes that "the hypothesis that children's within-family micro-environments play a causal role in the shaping of their personalities"—because it has proved so inhospitable to good testing—has been disproved.

These twists and turns of recent research look like conscientious (if sometimes tortuous) science on an admittedly elusive mission. To Harris, however, they look like a tendentious refusal to relinquish a myth, the myth that when we say "environment," all we can mean is parents at home. Bring in another category—the non-shared environment outside the home, where peers and group behavior operate—and suddenly, she promises, all the qualifications and inconsistencies are no longer necessary.

Harris is right that figuring in peer influence makes a lot more sense than ransacking the house for a hidden key that, even if it could be found, cannot possibly open all the locks of an adult's personality. But she is hardly the first to propose looking farther afield, or to find peers out there in the driver's seat. Moreover, her discovery does not mean the end of wrangling over keys. Kagan points to a more heterogeneous array of competing influences on character—sibling relationships and "emotional identification with family, class and ethnic group," along with major historical events (such as generational turmoil). He warns of how unpredictably they mingle. Harris's peer theory, too, cannot begin to deliver on its determinist promise. It is tempting to say to them both, so what else is new?

V.

Yet inside the peer theory that Harris hypes is a lucidly modest idea struggling to get out—an idea at odds with her own claims about peer supremacy, and out of step with the prevailing pal-parent anxiety. The idea is that parents are their own peers, not their children's, and that they have plenty of power, thank you, without aspiring to be held accountable for every turn in their offspring's fates. As family traditionalists condemn Harris and the bustling believers in the post-nuclear family welcome her news, and as she and the child development experts play "my study tops yours," nobody seems to grasp the old-fashioned thrust of this new guru's arguments, including perhaps the new guru herself.

Harris has usefully shown what many researchers, and most parents in their heart of hearts, know: that it is next to impossible to prove that parents' conscious, scientifically measurable child-rearing behavior at home has a predictable, scientifically measurable impact on their children's social futures (beyond, that is, what can be ascribed to the genetic bond between them). Still, as she proceeds to point out, that leaves parents plenty of room (and responsibility) to be forceful (which doesn't mean fierce) influences on their children as they are growing up. This is a fact that other experts have helped us to forget.

By the same token, as Harris of all skeptics should have predicted, her own evidence for the peer assumption turns out to be just as shaky as data for the nurture assumption. And that should be reassuring news to parents. Moreover, they might be heartened to realize that Harris grants them, as a peer group of adults, cultural power to shape indirectly the peer culture that their children soak up from the minute they sit down to their cereal. These are the unscientific but significant lessons that have been lost in all the commotion around this book, and in Harris's own promotion of it. Parents have clout that, in their childish dreams of greater control, they and their experts have underrated—and undercut.

Harris's "group socialization theory," as she calls her peer principle, may be just the jolt that parents need to get a grip on themselves. Its weaknesses as a monocausal account of the molding of personality quickly become apparent, but Harris deserves real credit for trying to describe carefully where others have been content to prescribe wildly. Her theory represents a rare effort to explain how children actually interact with their peers. The usual focus in the long history of American panic about "youth" has

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been on the overreaction of parents to those peers. Decade after decade, experts and parents have been in a dither about how "the place of the home tends to recede before a combination of other formative influences," children's peers being the main one, as the Lynds reported of Middletown in the late 1920s and 1930s. That particular mother was out wobbling on roller skates with the kids—rather than inside teaching them, say, bridge—because she was on a mission to ensure that her children conformed to the "approved ways of the group." Which meant that she had to do her bit to go along with those ways, too. This was, at any rate, what prevailing advice suggested she do—if she understood it correctly. As another Middletown resident confessed, the newly emerging wisdom for parents in a peer world was thoroughly bewildering. "I try to do just what you say," she told the Lynds, "but I am a nervous wreck just trying to stay calm."

It was, understandably, hard to tell how peers were influencing children's behavior in the emerging consumer culture of postwar America. A flood of defensive prescriptions about the ways in which the existence of those peers should be influencing parents' behavior did not tend to clarify matters—except, perhaps, by implying that adults were suddenly in much the same boat as children. Like the offspring whom they sent out into a newly bureaucratized society, parents were buffeted by conflicting norms for home life and outside-the-home life, and they felt under new pressure to conform. Some experts, such as Watson, urged them to be harder and cooler at home, and "treat [children] as though they were young adults" to firm them up to prosper in a flexible world. Gentler helping professionals urged them to become softer themselves, "grown up children" communing warmly with their children before sending them into a harsh world. A new catch-all ideal, for child-rearer and child alike, arose to finesse all the tensions: "the adjusted personality."

Harris bluntly challenges the strained harmony. She argues that learning to distinguish the differences between children and adults, between the home and the world, between "relational" behavior and group behavior, is the essence of socialization—which she, like her predecessors, equates with personality development. In place of the adjusted or "wholesome" personality, she recognizes what might be called, in the biological terms she favors, the adaptable personality. She divides personality into "two components," an "inborn" part that "goes with you wherever you go; it influences, to some extent, your behavior in every context," and an "environmental" part that is "specific to the context in which you acquired it" and thus changes, depending on where you are. She emphasizes two contexts in particular: the home, where relational experiences happen, and the peer group, where the child struggles to assimilate to—and differentiate herself from—others. (The brain, conveniently, also has two "departments": one for those one-to-one "dyadic" relations, and another for social interactions involving more people.) Harris stresses what every parent soon notes, that there can be a jarring disjunction between a child's "home" self and "social" self. (The first school conference is usually a parent's awakening. "What a cooperative child," the teacher exclaims, and you can barely keep from falling out of your chair.)

Harris has certainly learned her discriminating lessons well! Her zealous categorizing points up not just the unscientific fuzziness of so much expertise, but also the perils of overschematizing personality development. Thus she sets up her own tidy theory for a fall. Children need intimacy with their parents and imitate them a lot, Harris maintains, but that "relational" personality only operates at home and doesn't count in toting up how a person "turns out." (In a similar spirit, she discounts the long-term influence of one-on-one intimacy outside the family, invoking just the kind of dubious studies you would think she would scoff at. Some research has evidently shown that grade-school friendships—or the lack of them—have no effect on "overall life status adjustment," whatever in the world that might be.) "The public personality ... the one that a child adopts when he or she is not at home" is the one that we carry with us into the world for life. And it, Harris claims, is shaped in the group maneuvering among peers, starting very early; and it counts for everything.

Surely her formulas are too formulaic. The public personality, almost by definition, is the one that gets submitted to the psychologists for measurements of social competence, but that hardly makes it the sum total of the "real" self. In her eagerness to give peers supreme control, Harris has manufactured an argument that verges on tautology. Indeed, she provides her own best criticism: "the human mind wants to categorize ... even when [things] fall along a continuum and not into convenient clumps." She also supplies ample evidence that muddies her extreme case for peer clout, and that helps to clarify the true contours of parental sway. (The really valuable revelations of this book are not what she touts or apparently thinks.) Harris does not spend much time discussing "home" nurture. But what she says is meant as a reminder to parents that they are not the "wimps" or the "wallpaper," in her words, that they often fear they are. They have an immediate, daily, "dyadic" power that they overlook—and can undermine—in trying too hard to be their children's equals and in worrying about how they might be influencing their social futures.

The unfashionable and useful lesson of Harris's book is that parents are not their children's peers at home. Sons and daughters depend every day on their greater power and experience, even if they are not defined for all time by the help and the guidance that their parents supply. What parents do with them and for them shapes a one-of-a-kind relationship, not a made-to-order social personality. More than a little of what parents impose and model at home will be overridden by their offspring's peers—but a lot will not be overridden. "Anything learned at home and kept at home—not scrutinized by the peer group—may be passed on from parents to their kids," Harris says. "Maybe even how to run a home." That sounds like child-rearing to me. To be sure, it is a rare parent who merely imitates her own parents' ways. Perhaps more often than not, mothers and fathers struggle to still those "home" voices in their heads—but that, too, is proof of how much lingers and how deeply.

Harris suggests in passing that religion, too, can be a durable legacy from home. On "values," she is vague and unconvincing—but then, who isn't? As Robert Wright has pointed out, Harris misreads what little evidence she considers, claiming that a classic study from the 1920s found no correlations between cheating and honesty inside and outside the home (at least during childhood: the experiment didn't even try to measure correlations between youth and adulthood). In fact, the study did yield some correlations—and a recent re-analysis of the data has found even more, for what it's worth. Genes, too, are passed on, of course, and they shape that "inborn component" of personality. All this is transmitted—and Harris says all this doesn't count. Yet add it up, and parents can hardly complain about being made to look marginal.

And Harris does not stop here. She slams the front door on parents, keeping them a housebound force, only to open the back door and let them out again. Her theory has a big loophole that

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restores parents as a socializing influence with power outside the home—not as individuals molding their own child, but as a peer group transmitting culture to their children's peer group. "The easiest way to tell who socialized a child—who gave the child her culture—is by listening to her," Harris sums up her theory, drawing on the linguistic evidence that serves as her strongest proof. "She got her language and accent in the same place where she got the other aspects of her culture. She got them from the children's peer group, which—in most cases but not all—got them from the parents' peer group." Deaf children of hearing parents and second-generation immigrants are the exceptions that prove her rule that the peer group comes first in the chain of influence: they end up talking like their fellow kids, not like their parents.

Yet Harris's evidence, much like the "proof" for the nurture assumption that she has ruthlessly scrutinized, actually makes a powerful case for the indeterminacy of influence under ordinary circumstances. Language acquisition is not the same as personality development, which is presumably a more amorphous process. The culture of the deaf is not ordinary culture, and the power of peers among such children is presumably abnormal. In more typical situations, Harris readily acknowledges, it is next to impossible for a scientist, much less a child, to filter out parent culture in our permeable world. And peer culture can be hard to pin down.

Consider a small study that Harris cites as a rare example of the kind of test that her theory requires. Students were interviewed about their school attitudes before and after they switched cliques, and it turned out that they were conformist chameleons. Kids switched cliques too fast, the researcher cleverly figured in designing the research, for any changes in attitude in the children to reflect their parents' views. Voilà: pure peer shaping at work! But precisely because children—especially in middle childhood, when Harris says peer molding is at its peak—do move among groups so quickly, and because the groups themselves so often melt and shift, how could personality be as decisively shaped by the process as she suggests, "children . . . typecast into roles that might last them the rest of their lives"?

How, at any rate, could studies ever decisively prove it? By means of the media, cultural influences pervade all different groups. And as Harris herself emphasizes, membership in a peer group is not just about conforming to its norms, it is also about distinguishing oneself within it. So, for example, even if those students had not turned out to be chameleons, their views could be explained as peer-influenced anyway. Talk about slippery studies that could prove anything, and nothing. Harris's own daughters, whom she holds up as proof of parental powerlessness, work just as well as disproof of lock-step peer determinism. They hung out in similar elementary school crowds, and one proceeded to be a model high school student (who needed no guidance), the other a "burnout" (who heeded no counsel)—and both have turned out fine.

Moreover, as Harris herself shows, children (unlike scientists) are not focused on ingeniously trying to filter out parent culture. Their main order of business is trying to fit into their peer culture. Sure, they like to distinguish themselves as a group from adults (as from other cliques of kids), but until adolescence they do not have to work very hard at that: children are different from grown-ups, and they know it. They are also savvy imitators and creatures of habit. They bring their home "culture with them to the peer group, but they do it carefully, tentatively," eager to conform and wary about any weirdness they might betray, yet also primed to stick with what they know.

In short, children are not plotting a cultural revolution. They are committee members ready to compromise. What children discover they hold in common with other children, Harris emphasizes, they keep. Thus the more cohesive the parental culture—the more that the parents of a child's group of friends hold in common—the more will be passed on to the children's culture. Parents can cater to an adolescent common denominator in the attitudes and the interests that they cultivate or tolerate. The Disneyfied, commercialized, sexualized, media-dominated world of parental nightmare is not some deracinated "peer" realm. (Toys, and plenty else, R all of us. They are part of the vast cultural equipment that adults transmit—or try to resist transmitting—as parents, and that is conceived, manufactured, and marketed by adults.) Or parents can get in touch with their inner-adults and decide what standards, what personal and social qualities, they think are important, not just for their children but for themselves, in concert with the adults around them. Children won't buy all of it anyway—where would civilization be if they didn't bite back? Still, they will absorb plenty.

Harris's logic of group norms knows no ideological bias. It can justify gated communities as havens of carefully chosen parental homogeneity. It also helps to explain gangs, and might inspire some hope about them. Where blighted early family life has often been blamed for neighborhoods under siege, concerted effort to change peer culture, long before adolescence, might help. Harris would be the last to suggest that it would be easy, but probing for the secrets of children's culture rather than for the secret of parent nurture certainly looks like a sensible place to start. Still, in the end, a change of peer culture is really nothing less than a change in culture generally. It may be that cultural criticism is one of the requirements of good parenting. After all, one of the many rubrics under which American children are reared is America.

Amid millennial alarm that, in the words of Kiku Adatto, the director of Children's Studies at Harvard, "all the barriers between childhood and adulthood are breaking down," Harris's book—if you actually read it, and between its lines—strikes a rare note of reasonable calm. She is in league with children, demonstrating what it really means to pay respect to their autonomy. She is also on the side of parents, defending their maturity and reminding them of what that really means. She cannot quite decide about the experts—she wants to beat 'em and to join 'em—

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but she is not about to be bullied by them. If *The Nurture Assumption* becomes a benchmark in a century of child-rearing lore, it should be for the right reason. Harris's book is valuable not because it stirs up a version of the same old, defensive controversy about parent power, but because it encourages parents to step back from determinist dogma—and from themselves. Understandably unsure of our own authority, we have freighted our hopes for our children with fears about our own power. A quest for harmony between generations has turned into a crusade for unity, equality, and ever greater control. And we have been surprised to find ourselves lost in anxiety instead.

In truth, this message, too, has been around before. Back in the 1920s, in an article called "Progressive Parents—Their Tragedy," a writer in THE NEW REPUBLIC was struck by widespread parental unease. Conscientious companions to their children from cradle through college and beyond, mothers and fathers had found their reward was a rude surprise: a generation with mores and aspirations quite at odds with their own. This writer knew where to turn for the right seasoned perspective. Not to the experts with their primers and promises. "Lucky are we," she concluded instead,

> if we attain the perspective of one grandmother who said to her daughter: "Always remember that mothers aren't important. They don't amount to much. They give their children life, keep them clothed and nourished, teach them manners and the fundamental moral things we have to have to get along at all. But the big things that count we do not give. What we give they keep forever, but they are unconscious of it, it is not a live force. The inspirations that will grip and shake them must come new and fresh. The ideas for which they will give their lives will not be ours. They will get them from teachers, books, friends, from those they fall in love with, not from us."

Humility, unlike clarity, does begin at home. •

Hell and Humanitarianism

BY DAVID RIEFF

We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda by Philip Gourevitch

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 356 pp., $25)

Think back to what it was like to turn on the evening news in early April 1994. International stories got little play, then as now. What got air time were mainly vignettes from the Yugoslav catastrophe: the cleansed villages of the Drina Valley, the devastation of Mostar, Sarajevo. And then, suddenly, those images, at once so poignant and so difficult to grasp, were replaced by a very different landscape of excruciation. The dateline was utterly obscure—Kigali, Rwanda, in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa—but the catastrophe that was unfolding there was the most horrific of all, a genuine genocide.

In terms of the number of dead, what took place in Rwanda approached the levels of the Cambodian killing fields of the late 1970s. Militant members of the majority Hutu tribe, led by senior officials of Rwanda's legitimate government and egged on by the Rwandan media, had undertaken literally to exterminate the minority Tutsis. By the beginning of May, this effort, begun only a month earlier, was poised on the brink of success. The killing was artisanal, with many more people killed by machetes and hoes, or by fire in the churches and schools in which they took refuge, than by guns or grenades. And if there were, by some estimates, as many as a million victims, including moderate Hutus who had wanted no part of the "Hutu Power" movement or of the Interahamwe militia that was its instrument, there were probably more than two hundred thousand killers.

Rwanda, in other words, provided the definitive repudiation, if repudiation was really needed, of the belief that, in the aftermath of the cold war, the promise of what some human rights activists called "The Never Again Century" was on the brink of being fulfilled. Nothing had been done about Nazi Germany, it was said, because the structures of international order that were needed to prevent genocide were not yet in place, and the killing was done, if not wholly secretly, at least out of full view. And nothing had been done about the Cambodian genocide, it was said, because those structures—the Genocide Convention of 1948, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols of 1977, the United Nations itself—had been stymied by the cold war. But the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 unfolded for all to see, on the ground and on television screens across the world. In the Great Lakes, and about the Great Lakes, nobody would be able to claim that they didn't know.

And yet most people outside a narrow stratum of activists and specialists acted throughout the Rwandan catastrophe as if there were something irreducibly obscure about what was taking place there. The images of horror that were transmitted from the Great Lakes never had the effect for which the reporters who recorded them had hoped. There were many reasons for this lack of response. Racism played a role, of course. The story of Bosnia, which arguably was also a genocide, had a certain man-bites-dog quality: blond Europeans were not supposed to be herded into concentration camps in 1992. But the news from Rwanda was greeted with resignation. Wasn't that the way things were in sub-Saharan Africa? In any case, before the onset of the genocide, few Americans had even heard of Rwanda. And even those who had heard of Rwanda mostly associated the country with Dian Fossey and her mountain gorillas. During the early 1990s, the period in which a civil war raged in Rwanda and in neighboring Burundi and the seeds of the genocide were sown, the American media produced far more stories about mountain gorillas than stories about Rwandan politics.

Yet Rwanda exposed more than the skewed priorities of Western journalism or the impossibility of caring about everything. Most people were horrified by the genocide, but the darker lesson of what took place there was that, where genocide is concerned, pious sentiments are not enough. And on the questions of what to do and how to do it, there was little agreement. If, as was routinely alleged at the time, the United Nations peacekeepers who were stationed in Rwanda when the killing started had failed in their duty, should the UN peacekeeping forces be given more resources and stronger mandates, or should some other power be charged with ending the killing? Practically speaking, this meant the United States. But

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the Clinton administration shamefully refused to intervene militarily, and it refused even to use the word "genocide" in its official statements or in those of the Security Council.

Anyway, if it really was the duty of the United States to send its soldiers to kill and to die in the green hills of Central Africa, did that not mean that the United States needed to go on serving as the world's policeman? Did this not knock into a cocked hat all the left-liberal pieties about American imperialism that these same human rights activists had been peddling for decades? No problem, they insisted. They cited the Genocide Convention of 1948 that had imposed an affirmative obligation on its signatories to act. But alas, Rwanda proved a very different lesson. It proved that situations which are legally legible are not always morally legible.

But this was a distinction that human rights activists, with their Kantian view of human rights as a categorical imperative, flatly rejected. It is true that Kenneth Roth, the head of Human Rights Watch, declared more than once that the United States and others had a duty to intervene in circumstances of genocide; but what was self-evident to Roth and his colleagues was evident neither to the American government nor to the public at large. The law might have been settled, but there was little public support for its provisions. People were against genocide, but they were also unsure about sending soldiers to stop it. And so the skies over Kigali did not darken with troop transports. The slaughter was carried out with dazzling speed, and the Tutsis would certainly have been exterminated had other Tutsis, grouped in the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in exile, not invaded the country, seized power, and brought the killing to an end. It was only after the killing had ended that there was any American consensus in favor of an American intervention. By then, of course, such action was deemed to be entirely humanitarian and entirely free of risk.

These were the complexities of that murderous spring and summer in Central Africa. It was not the United Nations or international humanitarian law that halted a genocide; it was a military campaign by one of the Rwandan factions. And in the war's aftermath, the humanitarian effort deployed to rebuild the devastated country, and to care for the millions of Hutu refugees who reacted to the RPF's victory by fleeing into neighboring Zaire, had the unintended consequence of embittering the new Rwandan authorities, who had hoped for more aid; and of providing the refugees, many of whom had either participated in the genocide themselves or had fled with family members who had blood on their hands, with a safe haven from which to relaunch the genocide. Philip Gourevitch correctly observes, in his remarkable account of the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath, that the international response to the genocide guaranteed that the next war in Rwanda would be about the genocide.

For Gourevitch, it became harder and harder as he traveled through the hills of Rwanda not to think of it "as an impossible country." To the extent that he is referring to his writerly anxieties about his ability to convey the Rwandan realities to a Western audience, he need not have worried. His account of the genocide, and his dissection of the insufficiency and the clumsiness of the West's response, is ardent and authoritative. He is not the only writer to have evoked the Rwandan catastrophe with eloquence, insight, and learning—Fergal Keane's *Season of Blood*, Gérard Prunier's *The Rwandan Genocide*, Colette Braeckmann's *African Terror*, and Peter Uvin's lesser-known *Aiding Violence*, an invaluable anatomy of the way development aid to Rwanda before the genocide contributed to what took place, are all essential reading for anyone with a tender conscience and a strong stomach—but Gourevitch stands alone in his ability to combine an impassioned and informed account of the Rwandan catastrophe with a meditation about what can only be called its spiritual significance.

Gourevitch's signal contribution is to have faced squarely what these failures tell us about ourselves. "The rhetoric of moral utopia," he writes, "is a curious response to genocide." More bitterly, he tells the story of the day he visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington and saw museum staffers arriving for work wearing buttons (they were for sale in the museum shop) that said "Remember" and "Never Again." That day he had been looking at newspaper photographs of piles of Rwandan corpses, and recalled President Clinton's promise at the museum's opening ceremonies that the museum was "an investment in a secure future against whatever insanity lurks ahead." And Gourevitch adds bitterly: "Apparently, all he meant was that the victims of future exterminations could now die knowing that a shrine already existed in Washington where their sufferings might be commemorated."

Gourevitch calls the administration's evasions on Rwanda shameless, and he is right to do so. "The harder Washington tried to keep its hands clean of Rwanda," he writes, "the dirtier they got." Whether it was denying that a genocide was taking place, thwarting belated efforts within the United Nations to organize a new peacekeeping deployment, or refusing to provide the aircraft or the vehicles for an all-African intervention force, America's behavior was revolting, as Gourevitch shows. And he is even more severe toward the French, who had supported the old Hutu Power regime in Kigali and whose own humanitarian military intervention in the summer of 1994, Operation Turquoise, was little more than a surreptitious way of providing aid to the Hutu *génocidaires* in the zones the French controlled. Operation Turquoise did save some Tutsi lives. Still, as Gourevitch rightly insists, its principal achievement was "to permit the slaughter of Tutsis to go on for an extra month, and to secure safe passage for the genocidal command to cross, with a lot of its weaponry, into Zaire."

Yet the deeper question to which Gourevitch returns again and again is how to think about martyred Rwanda, how to fit it into—Gourevitch uses the phrase about Rwandans, but it applies to Westerners as well—our "corpse-crowded imaginations." He begins with Primo Levi's terrible intuition, in *The Drowned and the Saved*: "It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say. It can happen, and it can happen everywhere." This is crushing enough; but it is only Gourevitch's starting point.

"It was not my strength that needed nursing," he writes, early in the book, quoting Conrad, "it was my imagination that wanted soothing." He presumes his reader to be in the same predicament, and correctly. "Perhaps, in examining this extremity with me," he writes, "you hope for some understanding, some insight, some flicker of self-knowledge—a moral, or a lesson, or a clue about how to behave in this world: some such information. I don't discount the possibility, but when it comes to genocide, you already know right from wrong." And then he lays his own cards on the table. "The best reason I have come up with for looking closely into Rwanda's stories is that ignoring them makes me even more uncomfortable about existence and my place in it. The horror, as horror, interests me only insofar as a precise memory of the offense is necessary to understand its legacy."

There is something ethically exquisite about this fine journalist. And yet there is also something wrong, something weirdly limiting, about that phrase "stories from Rwanda," which is also Gourevitch's subtitle. It is, to be sure,

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an appropriately modest characterization of his work by a reporter from the outside who insists on writing about something as "uncircumscribable" as the Rwandan genocide. Better to advertise your confusions from the title page forward than to pretend to an authority that you do not possess or feel. But "stories"? It is a bland, neutral, aesthetic word. It seems to shirk the moral and political point of the book that follows, which is not only a narrative, but also an argument; a harsh, necessary argument.

If Gourevitch is only "telling stories," then his effort need not long detain us, and what is one of the emblematic tragedies of our time becomes little more than a grisly *fait divers*. Other journalists writing about their time in Rwanda have fallen into that trap, and for most Americans and Western Europeans these "stories" are all that has endured of the Rwandan genocide. Rwanda entered their consciousness fleetingly and left with hardly a trace, the way tales do. But Gourevitch's book is not like that. It is a brave and intelligent work, and so his use of this solecism is baffling, a moral gaffe in a book with moral force.

Perhaps he felt that what he had to say was so awful that he needed the mask of the storyteller. He is certainly an accomplished one. There are pages that put one in mind of Naipaul or Chatwin. In a bar in the southern Rwandan town of Gikongoro, Gourevitch encounters a Rwandan Twa, a pygmy, who quotes Dickens and Brontë, and dreams of marrying a woman from the Netherlands, and talks of Africa's "sickness," and reflects on the imperative of humanity to conquer nature before admitting that the problem is that humanity is part of nature. The despair of Africa and its simultaneous, insatiable hopefulness is perfectly rendered in this anecdote, as it is in other passages in the book.

For all the glib talk in Washington and at the United Nations about an African renaissance—talk that has emanated from some of the same officials who did so little for Rwanda at the time of the genocide—how can any intelligent person not despair about Africa at least some of the time? Africa has been the scene not only of the third great genocide of the twentieth century, but also of many of the world's most intractable wars, of immense and deepening poverty, of an AIDS epidemic that seems likely to undo the economic gains of the few countries that are not almost beyond economic help. Africa is surely the most hopeless part of the human world, the place to which anyone wishing to confront the human inheritance at its most ruinous must look.

Yet Gourevitch's book is a powerful antidote: not to the bad news from Africa, but to the ways in which most people in the West respond to that news, to their pity, their incomprehension, their resignation. For Gourevitch is not resigned. When he admits to incomprehension, he is admitting only to his own decency: who is not sometimes mentally undone by events of such horror and such complexity? Still, Gourevitch has come closer than any other outsider to presenting the Rwandan tragedy in a form in which it might possibly be apprehended. He is a little like many of the people he met in Rwanda, most of whom, he observes, "seemed to have a favorite, unanswerable question."

For the most part, Gourevitch is able to accomplish this feat by the plainest means: he cedes the narrative, wherever possible, to his Rwandan interlocutors. He has his opinions, but he is a terrific listener. And it is Rwandan voices that are given pride of place. For them, the effort at understanding the tragedy that befell them, as victims, as bystanders, as perpetrators, is never absent. Some of the people to whom Gourevitch spoke wanted to know why so many Tutsis had allowed themselves to be killed; others wanted to know why so many Hutus had allowed themselves to kill. "It may have been possible to talk of something else in Rwanda," Gourevitch writes, "but I never had a conversation of substance there in which the genocide did not figure, at least quietly, as the point of reference from which all other understandings and misunderstandings stemmed."

Some readers may find that the aplomb with which ordinary Rwandans in Gourevitch's book confront these vexations strains credulity. And yet anyone who has been in Rwanda will find Gourevitch's portraits instantly recognizable. In the wake of the genocide, Rwanda is as much a gravesite as it is a nation, and with the war still going on, the death toll continues to rise. No wonder the words of the living are haunted by the memories of the dead. In the hospital at Mugonero, Gourevitch stands in the chapel where thousands were killed. "The people who did this," his companion tells him, "didn't understand the idea of a country." That thought, in the context of the seemingly unending enmity between Hutu and Tutsi, is unremarkable; but the writer's Rwandan interlocutor is not finished. "What is a country?" he asks. "What is a human being? [The people who did this] had no understanding." What Gourevitch is making clear, of course, is that neither does he. And that is the nightmare from which these Rwandans seem unable to awaken.

There are political reasons for this, which Gourevitch analyzes in detail. His own view is that the failure of the West to stop the genocide and to support the RPF regime that did stop it lies at the root of the current crisis. He believes that the international community, by sheltering the Hutu refugees in camps in Zaire run by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a program that cost more than a million dollars a day and lasted more than two years, failed Rwanda almost as gravely as it did during the genocide. Rwanda after the genocide, he observes, is "a world in limbo." It is also a destitute country and a country at war with itself.

A Western military intervention did not take place, but a Western humanitarian intervention did, and Gourevitch

The first Christians effaced the historical Jesus, mythicizing him and doctoring his teachings through writing, selecting, editing, and finally canonizing a sacred literature; critical New Testament study confirms this. But now, maybe, the historical Jesus is recoverable by means of the *Thomas* document unearthed in 1945, which claims to be enigmatic sayings of Jesus jotted down by a disciple journeying with Jesus. This claim is validated by Jack Hannah in ***You Will Not Taste Death—Jesus and Epicureanism*** through fitting the sayings chronologically with the historical framework of Mark's Gospel. Hannah then analyzes all 113 sayings: showing them to be free of early Christian contrivances, developing a new historical narrative, and demonstrating that in fact Jesus was oriented toward Epicureanism—the most materialistic, scientific, and anti-superstitious of all Hellenistic philosophies. The historical Jesus had a more realistic ontology and ethic than what his successors devised. Hannah's findings challenge the academic presupposition that Jesus taught within the theistic and messianic bounds of Judaism. This seminal, radical, 321pp.pbk. is $12 postpd. Order from:

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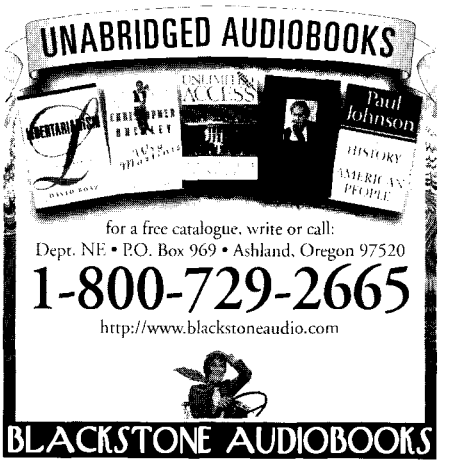

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describes its pernicious effects with enormous bitterness. For him, it stymied the attempt by the Tutsi leadership of the Rwandan Patriotic Front and the moderate Hutu politicians with whom they shared power to create what he calls the "radical dream" of a Rwanda that could confront the genocide and move beyond it, a Rwanda where all citizens, Hutu and Tutsi alike, could live peacefully inside their own country for the first time since independence. "The existence of a rump Hutu Power state in the UN border camps," he writes, "forced that dream to be deferred."

Gourevitch is not naïve about the limits of humanitarian engagement. Like any journalist who has traveled to the war zones of the contemporary world, he has lived among aid workers, and he has an intimate knowledge of their practices and of their premises. At one time, Gourevitch was sufficiently esteemed by *Médecins Sans Frontières* to contribute an essay to their annual volume, *Populations in Danger*. But what he wrote was so critical that in the end his piece was not included in the aid agency's book. From his own book, it is clear that his experiences in Rwanda made him profoundly skeptical about how the humanitarian effort was conceived and implemented.

He quotes Mark Frohardt, the deputy head of the UN's Human Rights mission in Rwanda, who said that he had never worked in a country where "humanitarian and development organizations were so resistant to the cause and consequence [of the war and the genocide] on the current situation." Frohardt told Gourevitch of aid workers who said things such as, "Yes, the genocide happened, but it's time to get over it and move on." And Gourevitch himself writes with bleak bitterness of the Western aid workers who criticized the Rwandan government's failure to make progress in trying the more than 100,000 people held in hideously overcrowded prisons or rural *cachots*, or in facing up to its own brutality in the conduct of search and cordon operations against Hutu Power guerrillas.

To the aid workers, the Rwandan authorities were making the genocide "an excuse" for their own crimes or shortcomings. Gourevitch has little patience with this view. "Here was a society," he writes, "whose soul had been shredded, where an attempt had been made to extirpate an entire category of humanity, where hardly a person could be found who was not related to someone who had either killed or been killed, and where the threat of another round remained intensely real; and here were young foreigners, who had been sent in the name of humanitarianism, saying that Rwandans should quit making excuses."

Gourevitch is not claiming here, as his critics within the aid agencies often allege, that the accusations of these relief workers were false. What he is saying is that they have to be understood in the context of the real conditions in Rwanda, and that the refusal of the aid workers and the human rights workers to do so constitutes a grave moral failure on their part, one not dissimilar to, say, condemning the Nazis and the postwar killings of collaborators in France as two examples of criminality to be treated with the same dispassionate legalism. For Gourevitch, this kind of moral equivalence, even if it is advanced in the name of humanitarian relief or human rights, is utterly unacceptable, and a terrible distortion of Western idealism.

Gourevitch does not really spell out the problem, which is that justice as it is understood by human rights activists is profoundly apolitical. For them, it is an affair of law, and to distinguish between crimes is to flout the legal canon as it has long been conventionally understood. The question of whether the interests of justice in the deep civilizational sense and the interests of international humanitarian law are the same does not long detain them. They view these matters as settled. Gourevitch, to his credit, does not. For him, it is the fate of Rwanda that matters. This view, political to its core, was bound to make Gourevitch an adversary, perhaps despite himself, of the human rights activists.

It also drove him to his criticism of humanitarian action. He is aware, of course, that the faults of the international response did not originate within what he acidly calls "the relief industry." He also knows that it would have been dangerous for the humanitarians to have tried to close the camps in eastern Zaire or to remove the Hutu Power leadership from control of them. Any such closure, they argued, would have exposed too many innocents to too much suffering. And yet Gourevitch is contemptuous of the humanitarian justification for the status quo in eastern Zaire, of the view best expressed by Soren Jessen-Petersen, now Assistant High Commissioner of UNHCR, that the refugee operation in eastern Zaire was "lose-lose."

The choice was an appalling one. To remain meant providing the *génocidaires* with a haven. To leave meant abandoning the hundreds of thousands of innocents, including the tens of thousands of children who were born in the camps during the more than two years that they were in existence, to hunger and disease. For UNHCR, as for most (though not all) of the relief agencies, it was better to remain. For Gourevitch, who rightly believed that, whatever the human toll, only the closure of the camps offered the slightest hope for a Rwanda not perpetually at war, it would have been better for the humanitarians to go, at least once the cholera epidemic that raged in the camps in the summer of 1994 had been stamped out.

Gourevitch's impatience with the self-exculpations of the UN agencies and the private relief organizations is understandable. Aid is a business, after all; there was an institutional interest in claiming that there was no alternative but to stay. Moreover, as Gourevitch points out, the aid workers' claim that the refugees would never return was proved wrong when the Rwandan army finally decided that the threat of the camps was too great and, with the help of the Ugandan government and a Rwandan-sponsored uprising in eastern Zaire, moved into the camps in the late fall of 1996 and dismantled them. This action temporarily removed the threat of the Hutu Power militias from the Rwandan border and returned the refugees to Rwanda.

But at what cost? Somewhere between 50,000 and 250,000 refugees disappeared after the camps were closed. Many of these people were certainly murdered by Rwandan regulars or their Zairean clients. That many of them were *génocidaires* is relevant, but it does not make what happened acceptable. In fairness, Gourevitch finished his book at a time when it was still possible to be optimistic about Laurent Kabila, the erstwhile comrade of Che Guevara who had run a small guerrilla faction in eastern Zaire for some time with no great distinction or effect, and whom a Pan-African alliance of Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola had helped install as Mobutu Sese Seko's successor as dictator of Zaire, now renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Gourevitch was anything but alone in his optimism; Madeleine Albright also fell for Kabila. And the leaders who had put Kabila in power—Kagame in Rwanda, Museveni in Uganda, Dos Santos in Angola—were precisely the men whom the Department of State had in mind when it insisted that a new political era was dawning on the subcontinent.

Those dreams have since come to dust. Kabila himself has switched sides, making alliances with the Hutu Power forces still active in the Congo, and orchestrating anti-Tutsi pogroms as a way of concealing his own incompetence. As a result, the Rwandans and the Ugandans have once again sponsored a rebellion in the eastern part of their enormous neighbor. This time there are Angolan, Zimbabwean, Tchadian, and Sudanese regulars

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arrayed against them. The prospect of a general war in Central Africa is suddenly very real, and the hubris of the RPF leadership in imagining that it could control events in Congo is plain even for its defenders to see.

In such a context, is an apolitical humanitarianism really so damnable after all? We are back to Jessen-Petersen's "lose-lose," and with a vengeance. But whether recent events bear out Gourevitch's belief that the "irresponsible engagement" of the international community in the refugee camps after the genocide is at the root of the problem, or whether, as most relief workers and UNHCR officials maintain, the apolitical priorities of humanitarianism needed to be upheld, and that to have supported the RPF unstintingly would have meant betraying those principles: this is an open question.

The last part of Gourevitch's book is far too categorical in its answers, and too optimistic in its assessments of African leaders such as Kagame and Museveni. His descriptions of Museveni are unpleasantly adulatory, and they remind one of works by an earlier generation of Western academics who saw in leaders such as Liberia's William Tubman and Senegal's Leopold Senghor a break with Africa's tyrannical past. With Museveni, Gourevitch's skepticism fails him utterly. When he writes that that Museveni is seeking "a middle ground [between tyranny and democracy] on which to build the foundations for a sustainable democratic order," you wonder whether this is the same Museveni who has damned multi-party politics as unsuitable for Africa, and who recently told a Kampala newspaper that AIDS is rampant on the continent because Africans are copying the sexual habits of the decadent West. Gourevitch wants too much to believe that the new generation of African leaders are different from their predecessors. But what if there are no heroes? From how many tyrants, from Tajikistan to Zambia, have we heard the denunciations of "cosmetic democracy" that Museveni uttered to this otherwise tough-minded journalist?

When Gourevitch reports uncritically Museveni's denunciation of the claim that Kabila was a pawn of Rwanda and Uganda, he has truly lost his bearings. For he has to have known that, at least at the time, a pawn of Rwanda and Uganda is precisely what Kabila was. Museveni's declaration at Kabila's inauguration in Kinshasa, which Gourevitch also quotes without comment, that the war against Mobutu "liberated not only the Congo but also all of Africa," was absurd at the time, and Gourevitch must have known this, too. He soberly remarks, in the same section in which his credulous account of Museveni appears, that he often found it helpful to think of Africa in the 1990s as "comparable to late medieval Europe"; but he does not stick with this sobriety. I assume that Gourevitch's honorable sense of outrage over the international community's—or, as he has called it in an essay in *The New Yorker*, the "international nullity's"—failure to stop the genocide or to respond properly in its aftermath is what left him strangely susceptible to Museveni and, of course, to Kagame himself.

In the case of Kagame, a war leader who can rightfully take credit for mounting the military offensive that ended the genocide (his tactics are now taught at West Point), Gourevitch's indulgence is more understandable. He knows perfectly well that the dream of a "post-ethnic" Rwanda, in which the distinction between Tutsis and Hutus will steadily diminish, is utopian at best. And yet, as he points out, what other alternative is there except genocidal war? Still, the movement from understanding to admiring is troubling also in the case of Kagame. When Gourevitch heard Kagame tell him that the world was using the refugee issue to "destroy his progress," he should have been suspicious. Instead he thought only that it was a great shame the general felt that way.

Still, there is honor in Gourevitch's suspension of disbelief. For what drew him to Kagame was his message of hope, his repeated calls on all Rwandans to transcend the categories of hate that inspired the genocide. It was Kagame, after all, who told Gourevitch that "people can be made bad, and they can be taught to be good." In the landscape of genocide that is an extraordinary statement, particularly from a man who spent his life in exile and as a soldier, and who lost, like so many of his comrades, dozens of members of his own family to the slaughter.

Cynics will say that Kagame and his fellow Tutsis have no other political choice than to think in this way, since they are such a small part of the Rwandan population. Why wouldn't a small minority propound a post-ethnic concept of the nation? Gourevitch thinks otherwise, and rightly. He sees Kagame and his RPF colleagues as genuinely committed to a better, more civilized notion of Rwanda, and of Africa. For him, their war remains what it was in the spring of 1994: a war against genocide.

"I cannot count the times," Gourevitch writes at the end of his book, "since I first began visiting Rwanda three years ago, that I've been asked, 'Is there any hope for that place?'" He does not

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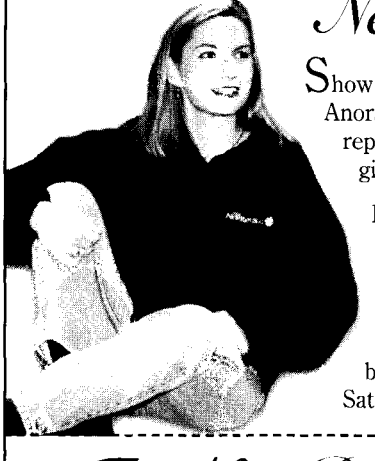

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answer the question directly. It is clear that he wants to be hopeful, even if he sees little reason for it. As he says, "hope is a force more easy to name and declare one's allegiance to than to enact." So he ends with a story, a story about a massacre at a school that took place in 1997, three years after the genocide. The *génocidaires* tried to get the students to separate themselves into Hutus and Tutsis. The girls refused and were shot indiscriminately. Gourevitch concludes: "Mightn't we all take some courage from the example of those brave Hutu girls who could have chosen to live, but chose instead to call themselves Rwandans?" One wants to say, one wants very much to say, yes. •

The Ancient Postmoderns

By Wendy Doniger

Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India by Roberto Calasso translated by Tim Parks

(Knopf, 446 pp., $27.50)

When Pogo, Walt Kelly's cartoon possum, wanted to refer to arcane, high-falutin', unintelligible nonsense, he called it "Samskrimps." This was his pronunciation of "Sanskrit," the ancient language of India in which the sacred texts of Hinduism and many of the texts of Indian Buddhism were composed from before 1000 BCE, making Sanskrit older than its cousins Greek and Latin. Most people still regard Sanskrit as an inaccessible scholarly language, despite the fact that Sanskrit texts were translated into English from the time of the British presence in India in the eighteenth century, and despite the fact that, by now, most of the classical mythology of Hinduism—recorded in the Brahmanas (c. 900 BCE), the Upanisads (c. 700 BCE), the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (300 BCE to 300 CE), and the Puranas (400 to 1000 CE)—is available in translation, admittedly often in "translatorese," a language that no living creature speaks or can read with pleasure.

The other side of the coin of this assumption that the language of Hindu mythology is "other" is the assumption, which the Anglo-American establishment inherited from Oxbridge, that the Greek myths are our myths. This, of course, is pretentious nonsense, pure "Samskrimps." People of my generation still say, of something apparently created *de novo*, that it sprang like Athena from the head of Zeus; but try saying it in a college classroom and you will be met by a bank of glassy, uncomprehending stares. (Hence the expression, "It's Greek to me," and the fact that "Greek" to most college students means only the letters that designate a fraternity house.)

The illusion that we English-speaking people are at bottom Greek is compounded by another illusion: that we Greeks are rational and cool, in contrast with those mad, hot Orientals; that the Hindu goddess Kali, with two (or more) too many arms, is the antithesis of that symbol of Greek culture, the Venus de Milo in the Louvre, with her Lacanian lack of arms—two too few. In answer to the sober Greek "nothing too much (*meden agan*)," Hindu excesses seem to endorse Mae West's observation that "too much of a good thing can be wonderful." Hindu myths are more rococo, often sexier, sometimes more violent than Greek myths.

British scholars generally scorned this rich mix in Hindu texts as a "hodgepodge," a mess of stories with no visible means of intellectual support, no boundaries, no rationale. In our day, the postcolonial perspective has revised our understanding of Indian culture in the light of our consciousness of the mutilating presence of the British Raj and the distorting gaze of Orientalist scholars. The postcolonialist critique argues that the British invented Hinduism for their own nefarious purposes, fashioning a chaos of texts that had no "essence" into a "constructed" entity that was exotic and erotic and above all inscrutable. Yet this attempt to rescue Hinduism from the Raj has backfired, ironically doing more harm than good to Hindu dignity. It is the old hodgepodge theory again, this time gone native: for "inscrutable," read "constructed."

If postcolonialism deconstructed Hinduism, the postmodern recognition of multiplicities and absences, of the loss of master narratives, has opened the way for a new appreciation of Hinduism. Postmodernists argued that to be fragmented and open to multiple readings is to be a text, not total (bad) but infinite (good). The postmodernists have turned on its head the old Enlightenment boast that Greek *logos* superseded *mythos*; they cherish ambiguity over clarity. And since we Greeks are logocentric, and logocentrism is a terrible problem, we can begin to admire those mythocentric Hindoos. Roberto Calasso sees a link between modernism and Buddhism—"What would one day be called 'the modern' was, at least as far as its sharpest and most hidden point is concerned, a legacy of the Buddha. Seeing things as so many aggregates and dismantling them"—but it is postmodernism that makes Hinduism available to us—or, if you prefer, that Hinduism makes available.

Calasso has already published *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (1993), which brought the Greek myths to life in the present age as no other writer has been able to do; he does for the entire Greek corpus what C. S. Lewis in *Til We Have Faces* did for one myth. And he has already assimilated India to Europe in *The Ruin of Kasch*, published in Italian in 1983 (and in English in 1994), which snagged the aftermath of the French Revolution in the coils of the end of a sacrifice in ancient India. Now, in *Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India*, Calasso has done for Hindu mythology what *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* did for Greek mythology: he has written a book that reads simultaneously like a novel and a sacred text, that ties together all the fragments of Hindu mythology into a continuous, readable, intensely detailed story.

How does he do it? In *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, he took on a relative sinecure, to revive the Greek myths for people who already believed (wrongly, but there is a placebo effect in literature, too) that they were the heirs of the Greeks. It is not so easy to lure his readers into imagining themselves inside Hindu mythology—there are all those arms. But since Calasso taught himself to read Sanskrit, no one seems to have told him that it is a dead language. He knows that he can think in it and feel in it and make us think and feel in it, too. This is how he does it, from the very opening of the book:

> Suddenly *an eagle* darkened *the sky*. Its bright black, almost violet feathers made a moving curtain between clouds and earth. Hanging from its claws, likewise immense and stiff with terror, *an elephant and a turtle skimmed the mountain*tops. It seemed the bird meant to use the peaks as pointed knives to gut its

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> prey. Only occasionally did the eagle's staring eye flash out from behind the thick fronds of something held tight in its beak: *a huge branch. A hundred strips of cowhide would not have sufficed to cover it.*

The portions that I have set in italics in this passage are taken from the *Mahabharata* (1.26.18-19). The standard translation of that passage, by J.A.B. van Buitenen, goes like this:

> Penetrating that large mountainous enclave with his mind, the Bird swiftly flew to it with branch, tortoise, and elephant. A long leather strap cut from a hundred cowhides would have fallen short of girding the branch that the Bird carried in his flight.

The rest is Calasso's imagination.

Calasso has rearranged passages from the Vedas to the Puranas so that they tell a single story that braids together the creation of the earth and the gods, the quarrels of the god Siva and his wife Parvati, the destruction of the human race in the armageddon of the great Mahabharata war, and much, much more, even the mythology of the life of the Buddha. (After telling the story of the rape of Usas, the goddess of Dawn, by her father, Calasso boldly, and hypertextually, asserts, "One day Usas became the Buddha.") Not only that; he weaves into this mythic narrative evocations of the great rituals, particularly the Vedic sacrifice in which the queen copulates with the white stallion, and the most vivid of the Upanisadic mystical meditations on the nature of reality.

He even manages to integrate into his narrative the text's self-consciousness of itself, just as the Hindu sources do. Thus he asks, of the *Mahabharata*: "Why is the frame in which the narrative is set so complicated that it alone would be enough to generate a sense of vertigo?" And, more generally about storytelling: "When the real has sunk away in space and time—and such is its most usual state—all that is left is a dark room where words ring in the ear." And: "It was as if everybody were suddenly tired of doing things that had meaning. They wanted to sit down, in the grass or around a heap of smoldering logs, and listen to stories." He also reproduces the Hindu text's consciousness that it is one of a number of multiple versions: "thirty-three (or three hundred and thirty-nine? or three thousand, three hundred and thirty-nine?) gods crowded the balconies of the sky."

Sometimes the multiple tellings become confusing. Calasso describes Indra, the Vedic cousin of Zeus/Jupiter, king of the gods: "All over his skin, a thousand vulvas surfaced in delicate tattoos, each opening just a fraction, like a sleepy eyelid. They . . . would ever remind him of a disastrous adventure." He then tells the story of that adventure, in which, in some tellings, Indra is cursed to be covered with vulvas that embarrass him (sometimes they even menstruate) until they are converted into eyes (an event encapsulated in Calasso's simile, "like a sleepy eyelid"). In the variant that he tells here, however, Indra loses his male organ (he is castrated) instead of gaining female organs, and so readers never find out about those vulvas. This is a rare lapse; seldom does Calasso nod.

He also makes the reader aware of the intertextuality of the Hindu tradition, the way in which one text refers to another. Thus, near the beginning of the book, the great bird, an eagle named Garuda, wonders "what it means to say that I am made of syllables," and as he flies through the air he finds the tenth book of the *Rg Veda* and reads hymn 121, which asks, "'Who (*Ka*) is the god to whom we should offer our sacrifice?' Estuary to a hidden ocean, that syllable (*ka*) would go on echoing within him as the essence of the Vedas." Calasso (translating the *Aitareya Brahamana* 3.21), tells us how Ka got his name: the god Prajapati (the Progenitor—the words are actually cognate; Sanskrit is not so far from English as people think) asked Indra, "Who (*ka*) am I?" "Exactly what you said," said Indra. And in that moment, Prajapati became Ka. That is, he said, "I am Who," and so he became Who. Indeed, later Hindu tradition, troubled by the open Vedic question, closed it by inventing a god whose name was the interrogative pronoun, *ka* (cognate with the Latin *quis*, French *qui*), Who. Read back into the Vedic hymn, as it was in the commentaries, this resulted in an affirmative statement: "Indeed, Who *is* the god whom we should honor with the oblation."

Calasso's book ends with a paragraph that begins:

> The watery expanse was endless in all directions. Only in one remote point could something be seen rising from it. Getting closer, you could make out a tree, but so thick and huge as to look like a mountain. Hidden among its branches, which formed an enameled pavilion, Garuda awoke. In his claws he held hymn number 121 of the tenth book of the Rg Veda. His eye settled on the very syllable from which everything had issued forth. Ka. . . .

Ka, then, is a word on the page of an English translation of an Italian translation of a Hindu text that translates (or rewords and expands upon) an earlier Vedic text. Ka is also the name of a god who is a question. Thus Ka is inside the text and outside it; he is a syllable in the text and he is the subject of the text. He is the question that is the answer to Gertrude Stein's deathbed answer to Alice

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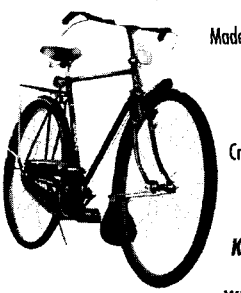

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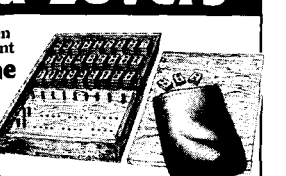

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Toklas's question (Toklas: "What is the answer?" Stein: "What is the question?"). How postmodern can you get? Vedic, that's how.

For the basic technique that makes this postmodern reimagination possible is actually very ancient and very Indian. (It might humble the postmodernists to learn that this vision of reality was discovered long before the twentieth century and nowhere near Paris.) Calasso finds what Hindu texts call the *bandhus*, or the bonds (another Sanskrit-English cognate), which he defines neatly as "the connections woven into all that is," the great themes that run like a red thread through Hindu civilization. To find the bonds between the human body and the night sky, between the experience of pain and death and the performance of the Vedic sacrifice, is to find the meaning of it all.

So, too, to find the bonds that link a brief riddle in the *Rg Veda* with a baroque story in the *Mahabharata*—and, beyond that, with the sensuous details of Calasso's personal imagination—is to make sense of the "hodgepodge," a kind of sense that no one before Calasso has even attempted to make. The *bandhus* that he uses to link the stories—bird, horse, snake, eye, tree, mountain, fire, water, death, the residue that survives the conflagration—are the same *bandhus* that Hindus have found in these texts for over two millennia. They are what Lévi-Strauss called "mythemes," the recycled parts that the mythmaking handyman, the *bricoleur*, uses to restructure new stories out of old elements.

Calasso is a consummate *bricoleur*. Thus he sees the *bandhu* between the beginning of the *Mahabharata* story, where a king is cursed by antelopes whom he kills in the act of coitus, and the end, where the man-god Krsna is fatally wounded in the foot by a hunter who mistakes him for an antelope: "Everything began with an arrow shot in perfect consciousness at two copulating antelopes; everything ends with an arrow shot in perfect unconsciousness at the sole of a foot mistaken for an antelope." Transgressing the borders of the text, he connects one Hindu text (Vedic) with another (Epic) by identifying the queens in the Vedic horse sacrifice, called "Mothers" (Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika), with the women in the *Mahabharata* who have the same names and are carried off by force, two of them impregnated against their will by Vyasa, the sage credited with assembling the Vedas: "They saw a shaggy, smelly man coming to their bed. Stiff and silent, they suffered his embrace. They could no longer groan, calling out to a lost mother, because they themselves were that mother.... Neither of the women recognized the dead horse or the compiler of the Vedas, in Vyasa."

Bolder by far is Calasso's insight into the bond between Vedic Hinduism and Buddhism. Elsewhere he has defined *tapas*, literally "heat," but usually translated as "asceticism" or "austerities," as "the heat that has baked our minds." Here he defines *nirvana*, literally "the blowing out of a flame," as "fire going home." These are inspired and unprecedented translations of these two complex terms. Then he remarks: "For the *rsis* [Vedic sages] the pivotal word was *tapas*, 'heat.' For the Buddha it was *nirvana*, 'extinction'.... Premise common to both the *rsis* and the Buddha: what happens in fire, with fire, is crucial." He also sees a *bandhu* between the very concept of the *bandhu* in Hinduism and the Buddhist concept of *pratityasamutpada*, usually translated as "the chain of dependent origination": "The unending net of the *bandhus*, of the 'connections,' became a single lace ... called *pratityasamutpada*, the interlinking of everything that arises." But then, he continues, "The Buddha breaks the analogical pact. He ignores correspondences. He doesn't deny their existence, but he belittles them."

Calasso expands upon these bonds in the Hindu manner. Erich Auerbach noted in *Mimesis* that the stark genre of the Hebrew Bible leaves silences and gaps in stories that other traditions, such as the longer-winded, elaborated genre of the Greeks, tell in greater detail; and when it comes to myth, Hindu is to Greek as Greek is to Hebrew. The *Rg Veda* often simply refers obliquely to a myth that the Brahmanas tell in a few stark sentences and the Epics and the Puranas spin out into hundreds of verses. Calasso describes this process: "From the allusive cipher of the Rg Veda and the abrupt, broken narratives of the Brahmanas, stories picked up only to be hurriedly dropped, one passed to the ruthless redundance of the Puranas, their incessant dilution, their indulgence in hypnotic and hypertrophic detail." And Calasso simply continues this process, just as Thomas Mann, for instance, expanded upon and explained the text of Genesis in *Joseph and his Brothers*, or as Tom Stoppard took passages from *Hamlet*, added water, and produced *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. These tellings imagine what the actors in the stark myth might have said in other, later genres, as if those actors, too, had thought of the expanded ideas but did not get around to writing them down.

One aspect of this elasticity allows Hindu texts to build the commentaries right into the narrative, explaining the story even while they are telling it. Calasso brilliantly adapts this device to inform Western readers not only about matters that the Hindu commentaries discuss, but also about matters that those commentaries neglect to mention, since they assume that their readers already know them. Thus he remarks of the building of a brick altar in the shape of a bird: "Here a false etymology, ever friend to thought, came to their aid. *Brick*, they said: *citi*. Bricks in layers. But what is *citi*? It's *cit*, which means 'to think intensely.'"

Sometimes this expansion takes us beyond the Hindu commentaries into the world of Western scholarship. After telling the tale of the fight between Indra and Usas, Calasso cites the German scholar Karl Geldner ("'A strange myth. No motive is ever suggested,' remarks a puzzled Geldner"), as well as Louis Renou and A. K. Coomaraswamy. And after telling, in gorgeous physical and psychological detail, the story of Urvasi, the Indian Swan-Maiden, who marries a human king and then abandons him when he violates his contract with her, Calasso remarks parenthetically on "the dispute between Vedic scholars, accustomed to arguing over every syllable: most of them understood Urvasi as meaning 'you cannot possess me when I don't want you,' but Hoffmann, in his study on the injunctive tense, came to the conclusion that she had meant the opposite: 'you can possess me even when I don't want you'; relationships between men and women have been marooned in this ambiguity ever since."

Purists (not I!) may feel that Calasso steps over the line on a few occasions, entirely out of the world of the text, even out of the world of its interpreters, and into the world not only of Western scholarship but also of Western fiction. This is certainly the case when he cryptically suggests that the god whose name is Ka "was to the gods as the K. of Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle* is to the characters of Tolstoy or Balzac." Of a sage with the head of a horse, Calasso remarks that he ends up "as a papier-mâché sign over the door of some *boucherie chevaline*." And: "The Spirit of the World, which Hegel saw on horseback in the streets of Jena ... was, for the Aryas, a horse's head...." And: "The 'waters' to which the Vedic texts endlessly refer resemble nothing more closely than the *jeunes filles* of Proust's *Recherche*," and "seen from afar, the *rsis* looked very like Plato's Guardians."

Calasso takes full advantage of the fragmented genres of postmodernity, which are better suited than traditional forms of translation to capture the spirit of the genres of Hindu texts, especially

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the earlier Vedic texts, which are not only fragmented in themselves but also come to us through more fragmented representations—the "hodgepodge." He gives us scraps of myths, images, repeated cameo appearances of various gods, but ultimately he integrates them all, from Vedas to Puranas, into the continuous line of the narrative. He draws them all together in the same voice, his own voice.

This is a magnificent reading of Hindu texts. Its power arises in part through strong, vivid writing and in part through Calasso's use of stunning, unexpected similes and metaphors. Thus the Creator, arranging the things that he will use in the ritual of creation, "looked like a beggar fussing with his few belongings," and the Creator's attachment to the things of existence remains "in the mind, buried in our being like a splinter no one can dislodge." When the gods wanted to create the avenging god Rudra, "like shrewd surgeons they extracted the most ghastly shapes from inside themselves." The red mouth and delicate eyes seared onto the sacrificial horse by the altar fire "are the marks left by that wound we call knowledge." The god Ganesa, "with his soft, young man's arms and wrinkly elephant's head with a broken tusk," is "like some toy left over from an earlier generation of children."

The immediacy of this language is well captured by Tim Parks's flowing English translation of Calasso's Italian translation of the Sanskrit. Parks has remarked that he thought of consulting English translations of the Sanskrit, until he realized that Calasso didn't translate the Sanskrit the way other people did. Is this an Indian book? An Italian book? An English book? It is all of the above. More than English, it is Anglo-Saxon; Parks has admitted his "habit of going for the Anglo-Saxon where I can." This is an excellent habit, and it has served him well here, where he has resisted the temptation of using a Latinate rather than Anglo-Saxon English vocabulary on the grounds of Sanskrit's relationship to Latin and hence to Italian, a language even more closely related to Latin than Sanskrit is.

Instead, Parks does an end-run around both Italian and Latin, unconsciously illuminating the submerged *bandhus* between Sanskrit and Anglo-Saxon. For not only is it the case that an Anglo-Saxon vocabulary always produces more visceral, living prose than a Latinate vocabulary does (consider that English obscenities, always close to the heart of a language, are generally Anglo-Saxon), but in fact Latinate English does not actually capture the punch, the compactness, the directness of Latin (or Sanskrit or Greek) as well as Anglo-Saxon prose does. (Consider how much more punch there is in "punch" than in "directness.") This is a masterful translation. You never have the sense of playing telephone, of being triply distanced from the original Sanskrit text.

I have known the Sanskrit texts for forty years, but Calasso's fresh gaze makes me see things that I never noticed before, such as the animality of the animal's experience in the story of the bird and the elephant, as well as many of the breathtakingly original connections, the *bandhus*. There are some words that I would translate differently, and some stories which in his rendering leave out some of my favorite lines or episodes; but there are surprisingly few. I wish Calasso had listed sources for the stories as well as for the quotations that he identifies at the back of the book; and I wonder where some of his variants came from. But by and large he has selected Hinduism's greatest hits, and made them greater.

What reception will this book have from its two audiences, experts on matters Indian and general readers? I worry that the snobbery and the turf-guarding instincts of the closed academic shop might prevent scholars of Hindu mythology from using this as the basic introductory text that it deserves to be. Sanskritists tend to be anal-retentive, pedantic, exclusivist dragons, who hide their treasures behind a thorny hedge of Samskrimps; and Calasso is not a member of the Samskrimps Establishment.

I worry more that the very strength of the book, the way that it moves through different genres, may make it difficult for scholars to categorize it and to decide just how authoritative a sourcebook it really is. One can use the different levels in different ways. The translation of the Ka episode ("I am Who"), for instance, is almost literal, and the exact source is listed in the appendix. The episode of the elephant and the tortoise, by contrast, is richly expanded, translated with more license, more elegance, and will, I hope, become precious to readers in the manner, say, of Chapman's Homer, still beloved when it has been technically superseded by more "accurate" translations. Still other parts of the book have the charm of Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam: a thing of beauty, far from the original, but a masterpiece in its own right. And when you start inserting Kafka into a Hindu text it is a translation only in the most generous postmodern terms. These last levels lack the authority of a quotable translation; the words cannot claim to represent the texts verbatim. Still, where this book touches down in the texts, as it does often on every page, it is the best translation that I know.

And what will be the reaction of the general reader? Is the book too disjointed? Too many different characters and names? Too many arms? I certainly hope not. I fear that one reaction may be: too much Sanskrit. For that is the only flaw that I see in Calasso's book. Perhaps out of a defensive desire to prove that he really does know the language, Calasso has put in more Samskrimps—diacriticals and all—than most card-carrying Sanskritists would do, inadvertently hauling into his text that thorny hedge as well as the treasure that he has stolen from behind it, and this may get in the way of the general reader. This would be a terrible shame, for *Ka* is the very best book about Hindu mythology that anyone has ever written.

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CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 7*

and femininity. The links I establish are ignored. Tweedledum just knows that it won't rain. Not *here*. "Nohow." Why is my argument avoided and my choice of texts deemed arbitrary? Because the purity of Lewis Carroll, Jenkyns's fellow Oxonian, must be maintained? Or, more likely, because he perceives some misguided feminist attack on "all" male writers? If so, Jenkyns's misreading is rather telling, since, in fact, I show that Thackeray satirized Ruskin, while MacDonald coyly distanced himself from both Ruskin and Carroll, his Oxonian friends.

But all is not lost. I seem to have encouraged Jenkyns into appreciating the artistry of Juliana Horatia Ewing, the indisputable "heroine" of my revisionary history. And he, in turn, deserves my gratitude for correcting me about British vs. American "moms."

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NEW HAVEN DIARIST

A super market

IT'S TEN-THIRTY ON SUNDAY MORNING, and Greg Williams, the manager on duty at Shaw's Supermarket on Whalley Avenue, descends from his second-floor office to inspect the store. He looks at the brimming salad bar and the rotisserie chickens turning behind the deli counter. He touches a loaf of French bread and notes approvingly that it's warm. Supermarket customers, he explains, come in waves. The key is to have the right merchandise in the right amount in the right part of the store when those waves come. The cooked chicken, warm bread, and salad bar are aimed at people coming home from church. And, by 11:15 a.m., just as Williams predicted, women with high heels, fancy hats, and well-dressed, hungry children descend upon the store.

THE SUPERMARKET THAT WILLIAMS helps run sits on the corner of Whalley and Orchard Street in New Haven. It is eight blocks from Yale's nearest dormitories. And it is two blocks from Kensington Street, which until recently housed the Kensington Street International, one of New Haven's most notorious drug gangs. The area is called Greater Dwight. In the 1950s, it was largely Jewish, and Whalley Avenue, its main thoroughfare, was New Haven's automobile row—boasting Ford, Lincoln, Pontiac, Dodge, Chrysler, and Plymouth dealerships.

FROM THERE, THE STORY BECOMES depressingly familiar. New Haven's big foundries—where Winchester made guns and Geometric made machine tools—gradually closed down. Like middle-class homeowners of all ethnicities, the Jews of Dwight headed for the suburbs, leaving behind a poorer and somewhat embattled orthodox remnant. The car dealers relocated to the suburb of East Haven. And, in 1981, Dwight's last supermarket shut its doors—leaving the now mainly African American and Latino residents to either pay exorbitant prices at small local groceries or trek to supermarkets at the edge of town. A study showed that the impoverished community paid ten to 20 percent more per capita for food than its suburban counterparts.

THEN, THIS SUMMER, SHAW'S opened a 54,000-square-foot store in the heart of the neighborhood. *The New York Times* cited the opening as evidence that supermarkets were returning to the inner city. And, as with so many recent trends, observers who were still struggling to understand why things in Dwight had gotten so bad were left to explain why they were all of a sudden turning around.

THE ANSWER STARTS IN 1990, WHEN New Haven implemented community policing. The police set up neighborhood substations and allocated some of the space to community management teams. The Dwight Management Team, led by an energetic neighborhood activist named Linda Townsend Maier, drew the attention of Yale, which in 1995 applied for a grant under a Department of Housing and Urban Development program aimed at helping universities improve the communities around them. Yale gave half of the money to the Dwight Management Team, which incorporated as the Greater Dwight Development Corporation (GDDC).

MEANWHILE, TWO ADJACENT BUSINESSES on Whalley Avenue, a cable company and one of the street's last auto dealers, began negotiating to sell their land to a New York supermarket developer named Marty Berger. Berger bought the land but soon realized he couldn't make a profit from a Dwight supermarket—the site needed costly environmental cleanup, and he couldn't get preferred bank financing for an inner-city project. So he invited the newly formed GDDC in as his partner, hoping it could lure nonprofit and government subsidies. The GDDC secured $1 million from the state of Connecticut and $3 million from the Retail Initiative, a national nonprofit created to lend money for inner-city economic development. Faculty and students from Yale Law School represented the GDDC at the negotiations with Berger, and last summer the parties struck a deal. Berger would develop the land and sell it to the GDDC, which would rent it to Shaw's.

ONE OBVIOUS LESSON OF THE Shaw's project is that inner-city revitalization requires the contributions of diverse actors. But, in a sense, the supermarket project also worked because none of the players contributed too much. We assume that the federal government depends on a balance of power among different forces, but the Shaw's story suggests that cities, too, require a balance of power in order to act competently and honestly. And yet impoverished communities often lack that balance—in part because ideologues of the right and left try to concentrate power either in the hands of businessmen, or government planners, or neighborhood activists.

IN THE CASE OF SHAW'S, NEW Haven's change in policing spurred the community activism that led to the GDDC. But city government didn't control the project. Unlike neighborhood groups in New Haven and other cities, the GDDC wasn't a power base for local politicians seeking patronage from city hall. And that meant that the GDDC didn't try to steer the benefits of the project toward political cronies, as happened several years ago with a proposed Pathmark supermarket in Queens. Yale, for its part, received the federal grant, which tied it to the GDDC. And Yale Law School provided the GDDC with the technical expertise to negotiate a contract that didn't leave it hopelessly in debt. But Yale also allowed the GDDC to set the terms of the deal, which gave the project legitimacy in the neighborhood. Shaw's was given free rein to operate in accordance with business principles. But the supermarket won local support by giving Dwight's various ethnic groups a say in what food it stocked. And so today Shaw's sells everything from Wolf's kasha to frozen chitlin loaf to five kinds of cooking roots.

OF COURSE, FOR THE SUPERMARket to succeed, Dwight's political balance has to endure. The GDDC runs out of federal money next summer, and it could find itself more dependent on city hall. Shaw's is only legally committed to stay for one year, and, so far, the store reports that it has many customers but that they do not buy much per person.

AND, WHILE MUCH IN NEW HAVEN is improving, the past few years reveal just how quickly social trends can reverse themselves. They seemed to take a turn for the worse last month when, walking near the center of the Yale campus, I heard shots less than a block away. I ducked behind a building, next to a young man who exclaimed, "I'm so glad I go to Princeton." But the shooting stopped, the police came, and no one was hurt. I hung around for a while to watch the commotion—then continued on my way to the supermarket.

PETER BEINART

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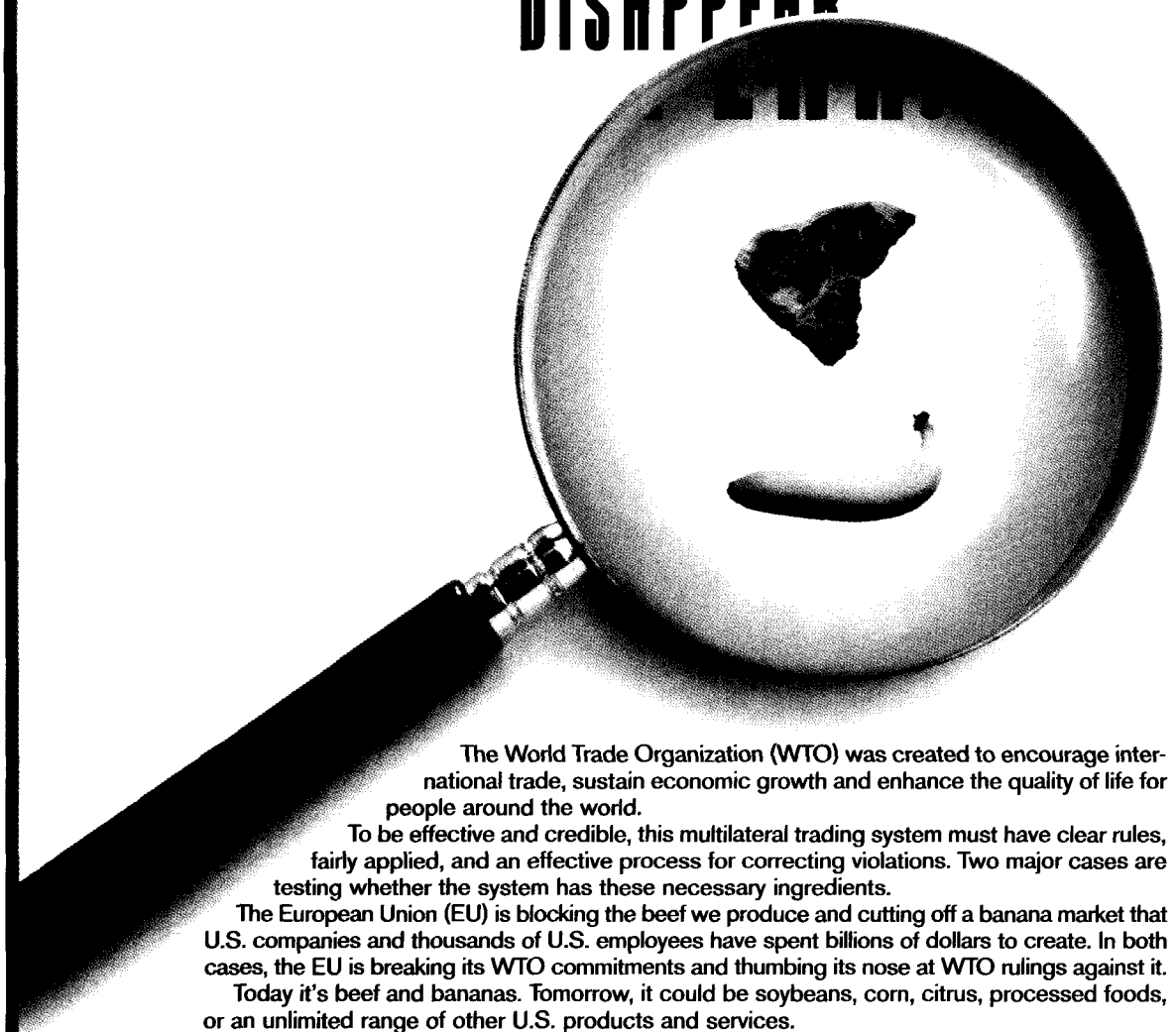

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